

# Covert Action

Q U A R T E R L Y

GLADIO:  
CIA SUBVERTS ITALY

## — The Betrayal of Peru's Democracy: — Montesinos as Fujimori's Svengali

by Gustavo Gorriti

### **Vladimiro Montesinos:**

*Traitor, narco-lawyer, convict,  
human-rights violator, CIA-linked  
spy, mastermind behind the  
Fujimori "self-coup," and possibly  
the most powerful person in Peru.*



CARLOS SAAVEDRA

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**Gladio:** The Secret U.S. War  
to Subvert Italian Democracy

—Arthur E. Rowse

**Duck and Cover(up):** U.S.  
Radiation Testing on Humans

—Tod Ensign and Glenn Alcala

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—Alex de Waal

**This Time Armenians are  
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**The Battle for the Soul  
of South Africa**

—Chris Vick

**Salvadoran Elections  
Bring Technical Democracy**

—Mike Zielinski



# Nixon's Greatest Crime? CAQ Asks

**SCOTT ARMSTRONG:** A plain, old-fashioned grafter, the receipt in cash of \$100,000 or more each from Howard Hughes, corporate executive Dwayne Andreas, Adnan Khashoggi, J. Paul Getty, the Davis brothers (owners of the Winn-Dixie southern supermarket chain), and Greek entrepreneur Tom Pappas, all taken by Nixon as personal gifts, some returned after Watergate.

**ED ASNER:** He is the definitive distorter of politics as we know it today. After exacerbating relations with China and Russia for at least 20 years, he reaped the benefit of that exacerbation by stepping in and becoming "the great peacebuilder-bridgebuilder." And American politics continues to emulate these actions.

**CHIP BERLET:** Remembering Richard Nixon for his foreign policy initiatives is like remembering Adolf Hitler as the father of modern large-scale rocketry.

**ANNE BRADEN:** Today, our nation is tragically divided and the entire future of our society is endangered because multitudes of fearful white people accepted the myth that their problems are caused by African Americans. Nixon played a major role in institutionalizing this myth. His campaign "Southern Strategy" was calculated to play on and encourage the fears of whites.

**NOAM CHOMSKY:** I would pick the bombing of a peasant society in inner Cambodia (a so-called secret bombing, the press refused to know) which caused tens of thousands of deaths, devastated the country, and helped create the Khmer Rouge.

**ALEXANDER COCKBURN:** Why pick and choose? There's no need for triage with all those evil deeds. But if you insist, I suppose the destruction of Cambodia would rank near the top.

**JACK COLHOUN:** His foreign policies. They caused the deaths of untold hundreds of thousands in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, even as he directed the overthrow of Salvador Allende in Chile, plunging that nation into more than a decade of fascism.

**DAVE DELLINGER:** The same as Bill Clinton's today: He would say and do anything that seemed necessary to advance his own political career, even though it might cause death, poverty, or suffering for others.

**DONALD FREED:** The secret bombing of Cambodia and the prolongation of the war in Vietnam in exchange for money, where the high crimes were war crimes and the profits.

**Publishers:** Ellen Ray, William Schaap, Louis Wolf

**Director of Research:** Louis Wolf

**Staff:** Hilary Dirlam, Margaret Hanzimanolis, Serge Hyancinthe, Bill Montross, Barbara Neuwirth, Joseph Reilly, Sharon Reilly, Jane Teller

**Photography consultant:** Dolores Neuman

**Editors:** Terry Allen, Phillip Smith

*CovertAction Quarterly*, 1500 Massachusetts Ave., NW, #732, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 331-9763, 331-9751 (fax).

*CovertAction Quarterly*, Number 49, Summer 1994. Published quarterly by Covert Action Publications, Inc., a District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation, copyright ©1994. Indexed by *Alternative Press Index*, University Microfilms, ISSN 0275-309X. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A. • Internet: caq@igc.apc.org •

**EDWARD HERMAN:** It is a bit difficult to identify Nixon's greatest crime because many of them were closely linked and flowed from one to the next in the unfolding of various criminal enterprises. In fact, Nixon's whole life work hangs together, realizing the potentiality for evil of a mean-spirited, amoral, and power-hungry individual leading Cold War America; so perhaps his greatest crime was being himself.

**CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS:** He was a common criminal; the presidency gave him the opportunity to be a war criminal. He brought the habits of a common criminal to his war crimes, and the tactics of a war criminal to his common crimes, which is one reason he got caught. His greatest crime must be his subversion of the 1968 election. He secretly asked the South Vietnamese junta to pull out of the Johnson-Humphrey "peace" talks, on the promise of a better deal from a Republican administration. This covert action against democracy at home also mobilized the most sordid elements and clients of U.S. policy abroad, and is thus the pattern and mold of his entire career.

**BELL HOOKS:** He set the movement to end white supremacy back hundreds of years.

**JUNE JORDAN:** His craziness led to the needless death of millions and millions of innocent Asian men, women, and children and several, several thousand Americans. His lying, venal, and paranoid leadership wrecked our capacity to believe in ourselves and to trust anyone who might be trustworthy in an executive position of great power.

**ARTHUR KINOY:** He was at the center of an incredible conspiracy by the most powerful right-wing corporate and political forces in the country to experiment with the abandonment of the written Constitution. This opened the road to fascism and resulted in the Watergate crisis.

**ERWIN KNOLL:** He prolonged the Vietnam War for years while pursuing the totally phony "peace with honor."

**BILL KUNSTLER:** His planning and engineering of the assassination of Chilean President Salvador Allende and the destruction of his democratically-elected government led to the murders of tens of thousands of innocent people.

**SAUL LANDAU:** Nixon chose the big lie as his road to success and then offered himself as a role model.

**CRAIG NEAL:** He told boldfaced lies to the American public and the Congress. He should have been impeached.

**MICHAEL PARENTI:** The massive escalation of the Vietnam War — including the systematic carpet bombing of civilian populations throughout Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam — resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of non-combatant women, children, and men.

**HOLLY SKLAR:** Nixon had many great crimes, among them COINTELPRO, Cambodia, Vietnam, Chile and scapegoat politics, and showing how well crime can pay in a society where the post-Watergate Iran-*contra* scandals did not produce Reagan's impeachment, but Oliver North's fame and fortune.

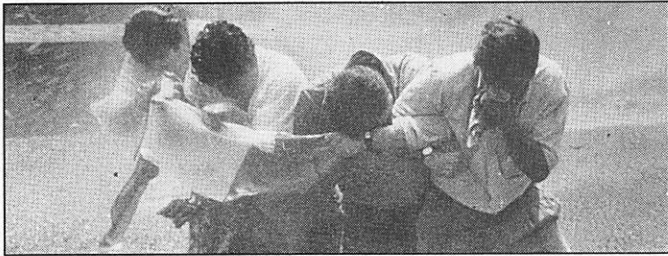
**SABINA VIRGO:** He was a greedy, power-hungry man. His greatest crime was to be born; the best thing he did was to be buried on the same day that the African National Congress took power. •



# CovertAction

Q U A R T E R L Y

## The Betrayal of Peru's Democracy: Montesinos as Fujimori's Svengali



*Gustavo Gorriti*

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From prison and exile to the elite inner circle, Vladimiro Montesinos' life is an improbably melodramatic series of ups and downs. Traitor, narco-lawyer, convict, human rights violator, CIA-linked spy, he was the mastermind behind the Fujimori "self-coup" and is now possibly the most powerful person in Peru.

## Hassan al Turabi's Muslim Brothers: Theocracy in Sudan



*Alex de Waal*

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Hassan al Turabi, leader of the Muslim Brothers, is the most influential political theorist and leader in the world of Islam since the death of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini. The theocracy he powers in Sudan has been branded as a terrorist state. The reality is more complex and more dangerous.

## Gladio: The Secret U.S. War to Subvert Italian Democracy



*Arthur E. Rowse*

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At the end of World War II, the U.S. created a secret "stay behind" army of fascists, Nazis, and anticommunist zealots. For over forty years, from the shadows, Gladio has destabilized Italy and left a trail of deadly bombings, coup attempts, and subversion. The terrible legacy lives on in the recently-elected Berlusconi government.

## Duck and Cover(up): U.S. Radiation Testing on Humans

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Recently revealed documents and decades of deceit show that the U.S. government and researchers not only experimented on humans but — out of fear of lawsuits and public condemnation — covered up evidence and



wrote off thousands of nuclear victims. The Clinton administration may continue the pattern.

## This Time, Armenians are the Aggressors

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Historically, Armenians have been victims of genocide and territorial encroachment. But in the latest round of the seven-year war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, it is the Armenians who now occupy nearly a quarter of Azerbaijan.

## The Battle for the Soul of South Africa

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The "New South Africa" has finally arrived. In a jubilant triumph, Nelson Mandela has ushered in the post-apartheid era. But unless the ANC's key Reconstruction and Development Program is implemented, what could have been a transformation of power will be only a transfer—and the new indicator of privilege will be class instead of race.



## Salvadoran Elections Bring Technical Democracy

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Using sophisticated techniques, El Salvador's death squad-linked ruling party has disenfranchised thousands to gain control of crucial legislative and municipal posts.

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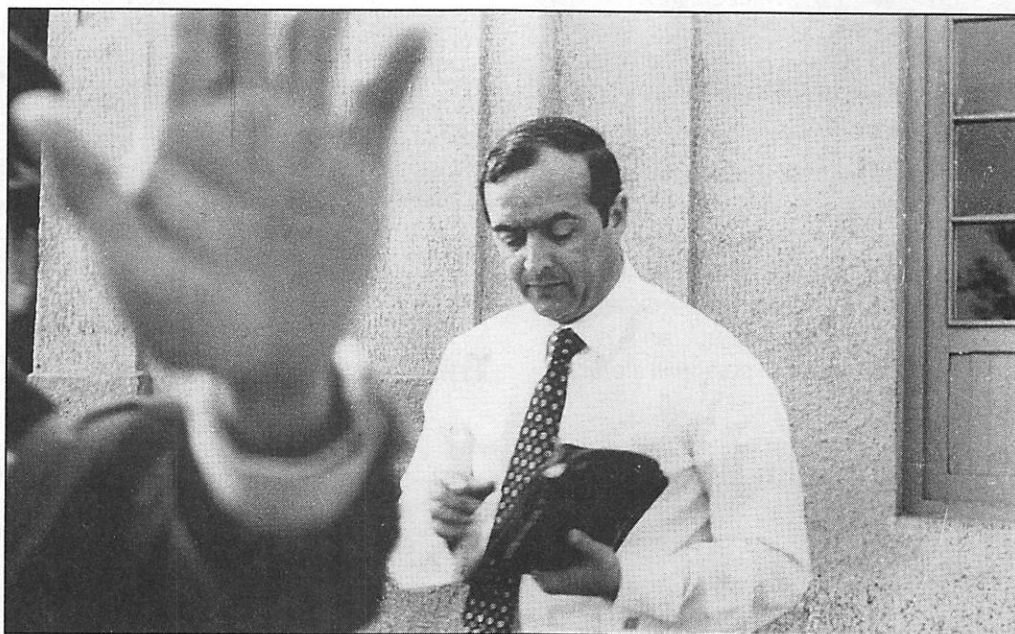
*Cover Design: Quad Left, Burlington, Vermont*



## Vladimiro Montesinos: The Betrayal of Peruvian Democracy

# Fujimori's Svengali

Gustavo Gorriti



*On April 5, 1992, almost two years after he was elected president of Peru, Alberto Fujimori dissolved parliament and seized dictatorial powers. The mastermind behind the conspiracy to overthrow democracy is Vladimiro Montesinos. For over two decades, Montesinos (above) has operated from the shadows. Narco-lawyer, traitor, human rights violator, former soldier, spy, he has mesmerized Fujimori and used close links to drug trafficking organizations, and then to the CIA, to become not only the country's de facto drug czar, but perhaps the most powerful person in Peru.*

**O**n the night of November 13, 1992, Lima was surrounded by a sort of fog of war. In the temporary panic accompanying that night's attempted coup, the shroud of intrigue and secrecy lifted for a few hours, and the truth began to emerge.

In the seven months since President Fujimori staged his *auto golpe*, his self-coup, he had conducted extensive purges within the judiciary and the state apparatus, aggregated dic-

tatorial power, and come increasingly under the sway of his personal Svengali — Vladimiro Montesinos. Some in the military had had enough. That November night they planned a counter-coup to restore constitutional rule and unseat the dictator. The conspiracy was doomed to fail. Probably infiltrated, it may have been an elaborate sting designed to lure into the open and entrap those army officers opposed to Fujimori's armed seizure of dictatorial powers. But as often happens, the provocateurs lost temporary control of the operation — just as they sprang the trap. When more officers than expected followed Gen. Jaime Salinas, the brave but unfortunate leader, the coup suddenly looked viable. Fuji-

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Gustavo Gorriti is a Peruvian journalist. He is now a senior research associate with the North South Center at the University of Miami. Photo: Carlos Saavedra. This 1983 photo of Montesinos is one of the few in existence.



mori panicked. He fled the presidential palace and headed for army headquarters. But midway, he changed direction and rushed to the Japanese Embassy in Lima, seeking refuge.<sup>1</sup>

With his whereabouts unknown, the regular system of communications broke down. Voices reached out across the night on cellular phones, while tape recorders hooked up to scanners recorded the conversations.<sup>2</sup> Fujimori, his voice slightly distorted by anxiety but unmistakable in its nasal tone, was at one end of the line. A rapid fire high-pitched voice at the other end reassured him that he was sending men to reinforce the presidential escort. Fujimori gave directions on how to reach him.

As the tape recorders eavesdropped, the man with the high thin voice went into gear. He suggested actions to army commander-in-chief, General Nicolás de Bari Hermoza Ríos, identifiable from his barking proclamations of allegiance to Fujimori. Hermoza immediately acceded and said: "If we don't find him [coup leader Salinas] now, we'll detain him tomorrow." "Why don't we detain him right now?" asked the other. "I have agents here. ... I'll have him detained, we'll take him out by force," Hermoza echoed enthusiastically. "By force, by force."

Later, when several arrests had been made, they talked again. "It seems we reacted fast," said Hermoza. "Who gave you the information?" "I'll tell you later," answered the other. Then just before dawn, after the coup had fizzled and General Salinas had been captured in a shoot-out, the conversation resumed, for a little gloating. "He [Salinas] is half crazy; he's out of focus," said Hermoza. "He's all fucked up. He's dead," sentenced the other man.

The other man, the one with the high-pitched voice, was promptly identified. It was Vladimiro Montesinos. While some people claimed he was the most powerful man in Peru after Fujimori, others asserted he was the real power, albeit behind the throne.

Several army officers detained that night at the National Intelligence Service's (SIN, Peru's equivalent of the CIA) headquarters experienced Montesinos' power in its most crude form. Montesinos and others hit Lt. Col. Enrique Aguilar del Alcázar in the face; later his hands were tied behind his back and he was hanged by his arms (a torture technique known in Peru as "la pita" or "la colgada") until pain compelled him to sign whatever they asked. Montesinos



Mariana Bazo/Impact Visuals

Pres. Fujimori, shortly after seizing dictatorial power.

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*Late at night, Montesinos would go straight to Fujimori's bedroom at the presidential palace. There, Fujimori's paranoia would be deliciously thrilled and policy would be made.*

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pricked Maj. Salvador Carmona (ret.) in his arms and legs with needles and had him strung up "colgado." He hit Lt. Col. Marco Zarate and when the officer tried to hit back, Montesinos' bodyguards tied him to a chair and administered electric shocks until he signed the documents they presented. Maj. César Cáceres, a former aide of Gen. Salinas, was thrown face down on a mattress. Two policemen caught his arms in a shoulder bar, and as a third sat on his waist and pounded on his back, Montesinos hit him in the face. Two days later, Cáceres was hanged by his arms tied behind his back. "I told them," he later wrote from prison, "anything they wanted because I felt my arms were being yanked off my body."<sup>3</sup>

Those who denounced the torture or criticized Montesinos or Hermoza were targeted: The homes of Gen. Luís Cisneros (ret.) and two other political leaders were bombed. Gen. Alberto Arciniega — a counterinsurgency commander in the coca-carpeted Upper Huallaga Valley — was sent into retirement and sought asylum in the Argentine Embassy.<sup>4</sup>

### Quest for Revenge, Victory and Power

They learned the hard lesson many already knew: Montesinos is a dangerous man to cross. He has much in common with the bizarrely brutal dictators of Latin American literature and history. But the reality of his life is less like a fictionally dramatic linear rise than a series of improbably melodramatic ups and

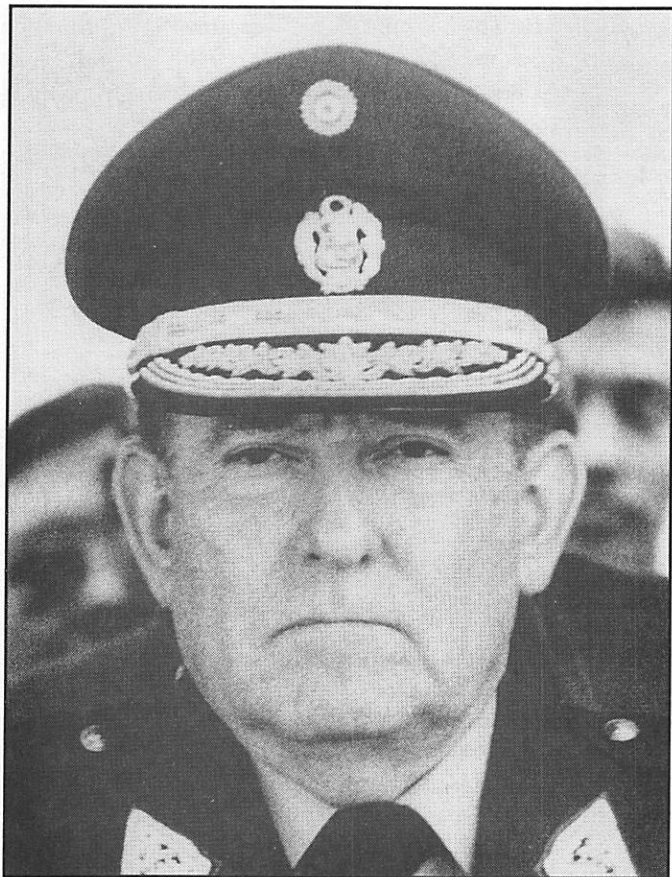
1. "El Refugio Nipón," *Caretas* (Lima), No. 1237, November 19, 1992.

2. "Voces En La Noche," *Caretas*, op. cit. The cassette was given anonymously to *Caretas*.

3. Legal declaration by Maj. César Cáceres, cited in *Caretas*, November 26, 1992.

4. Foreign Broadcast Information Service—LAT 1993-003, January 6, 1993.





Oscar Medrano P.

**Montesinos ally, Gen. Nicolás de Bari Hermoza Ríos, head of the army, was implicated in serious human rights violations.**

downs. Montesinos went from an early experience of power to an enterprise in betrayal; from utter disgrace and pariah status to a quest for revenge, victory, and power.

A sad and earnest child, Montesinos grew up in genteel poverty in Arequipa, a city in the south of Peru which was also home to the families of writer Mario Vargas Llosa and Shining Path leader Abimael Guzmán. The docile son of a family that prided itself on learning and culture, Vladimiro was a good student. He went into the army because his father thought a military career would offer stability. In 1966, he graduated with no particular distinction from officer's school in Lima and was posted back home as a sub-lieutenant.

He soon became engaged to a local heiress. After she gave him the loan he asked for, he dumped her and refused to return the money. Only on threat of prosecution did Montesinos' father scrape together the cash and pay the debt.

Montesinos was developing his behavioral signature: Seduce, use, and betray. The pattern, first stamped on a hapless woman, would later be perpetrated on a much larger scale.

### **Making His Move**

Although somewhat of a misfit in the rough, unsophisticated milieu of junior army officers, Montesinos soon demonstrated another characteristic behavior: He positioned himself close to power and the secrets it held. Indeed, that period was perhaps the only time in history when Peru had secrets worth keeping — and therefore worth selling. It was an opportunity not lost on the ambitious young junior officer.

In October 1968, Peru's armed forces had overthrown President Fernando Belaunde. Under the leadership of Gen. Juan Velasco Alvarado, Peru embarked on a program of leftist radical reforms which promptly put the military regime at loggerheads with the United States. Velasco expelled the U.S. military mission,<sup>5</sup> and in the early 1970s decided to buy Soviet weaponry to strengthen Peru's standing in the region. After Pinochet's coup in Chile, the Nixon administration got closer to Chile, while Velasco prepared for what he thought would be a showdown with Pinochet.

Montesinos tested the winds and attached himself to Gen. Edgardo Mercado Jarrín, with whom he shared origins in Arequipa, intellectual pretensions, and political ambitions. In January 1973, when Mercado became prime minister, minister of war, and commander-in-chief of the army, Montesinos became his personal aide and one of a small group of advisors. Some in this inner circle would remain part of the Montesinos story until the present: Of the two civilians, Rafael Merino is still a close associate, while Francisco Loayza became a bitter enemy; of the four military officers, Col. Sinesio Jarama later branded Montesinos a traitor.

Montesinos would buy books for the general, suggest quotes for his speeches, and hint that he was destined — with proper help — to be South America's Clausewitz. Montesinos soon became indispensable.

Alfred Stepan, then working for the Rand Corporation on the subject of the Peruvian military, and later a professor at Columbia University, met Montesinos in Peru. He remembers him as someone who "would pop up at odd hours. ... I never saw him in uniform. This young man presented himself as a military intellectual ... and he had read a lot of the stuff. ... There was no question that he was unusual. ...

He didn't even appear to have an office. I have never met anyone like him in my research ... an active duty who acts very much as a free agent."<sup>6</sup>

As a free agent, he kept himself busy. While his boss, Gen. Mercado, was negotiating weapons acquisitions with the Soviets, Montesinos had the run of his office, drafting Mercado's speeches, flattering the general, making extensive use of the photocopy machine, and going through the office safe.

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*Montesinos was developing  
his behavioral signature:  
Seduce, use, and betray.*

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5. Daniel Masterson, *Militarism and Politics in Latin America* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1991), p. 258.

6. Telephone interview, September 23, 1992.



Even after it was discovered that he had removed a document, Montesinos retained that access. Years later, Mercado would say that Montesinos came to his office, eyes brimming with tears, and confessed he had taken the document only out of intellectual curiosity.<sup>7</sup>

There is little doubt that Montesinos was snooping. In fact, with the increasing level of Byzantine intrigues among opposing factions, everyone was trying to spy on everyone else. Then intelligence agents began to get information that the presidential weekly agenda was arriving at the U.S. Embassy almost as soon as it was approved by Velasco. Suspicion fell on Montesinos. According to former army intelligence chief Rafael Córdova, even before entering Mercado's office, Montesinos had been a paid agent of army intelligence. That role was bad enough, but spying for a foreign power was unprecedented and treasonous. Some junior officers tailed him and became convinced he was trafficking in top-secret documents, mainly to U.S. intelligence officials.<sup>8</sup> Years later, in 1990, Col. Córdova, then-chief of army intelligence, charged that in the 1970s Montesinos had peddled Peru's complete list of Soviet weaponry, the list of new weapons acquisitions, Velasco's weekly agendas, and contingency plans for war with Pinochet's Chile.<sup>9</sup> Horacio Verbitsky, a leading Argentine journalist and author who sought refuge in Peru after receiving death threats from right-wing terrorists in Argentina, saw Montesinos often. "He had," says Verbitsky, "this safe box on the wall in his home where he kept all manner of very secret documents. ... Once he opened the box, took some documents out and showed them to me. ... [They] had something to do with the strategic equilibrium with Chile. Means, weaponry, something like that. I was very surprised to see the documents and very surprised that he would show them to me."

To Verbitsky, Montesinos was a strange individual. "He came to the center of power while still very young," he says. "He was a seducer, who at the same time awakened mistrust in all of us who knew him. We used to ask each other: 'To what service does he belong?'"<sup>10</sup>

### Montesinos' First Coup Plot

It was during these politically charged years, that Montesinos became involved in his first presidential coup plot. In mid-1973, he tried to persuade Gen. Mercado to overthrow the physically and politically vulnerable president. While Velasco was still

hospitalized after an aneurysm and leg amputation, Mercado organized a discreet meeting in his house with Rafael Merino, Col. Sinesio Jarama, and Capt. Montesinos to discuss ousting Velasco. Several alternatives were proposed, mostly by Montesinos, but Mercado hesitated, and the meeting ended inconclusively.<sup>11</sup> Soon after, the pro-Velasco forces organized a rally in front of the hospital. When Cuban ambassador Antonio Núñez Jiménez marched prominently in front and prodded Mercado into declaring his support for the ailing president, the coup project fizzled on the spot.

Velasco, however, was losing his grip. Military radicals and moderates — and their civilian collaborators — conspired against each other, and as provocateurs shifted from side to side, Montesinos continued to plot. He approached Julio Cotler, one of Peru's top social scientists, who had written about being disenchanted with the military reform process. The captain claimed he belonged to a group of young military officers who were appalled at the betrayal of "revolutionary principles." These young Turks were taking matters into their own hands and planning to kill the corrupt generals in the high command. Would Professor Cotler lend his intellectual support? Cotler threw him out of his office.

Years later Cotler saw Montesinos, already out of the army, sitting in on one of his classes. At the end, he came to say hello. Cotler, a very direct man, asked him, "Do you remember when I threw you out of my office?" Yes, Montesinos remembered. "And tell me," asked Cotler, "how could you think I could fall into such a transparent provocation?" Montesinos smiled, "Ah! Dr. Cotler, you wouldn't believe how many fell!"<sup>12</sup>

### Cast from the Inner Circle of Power

When Mercado retired in 1975, his protégé, Montesinos, asked to be transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture where he became an advisor to the minister, Gen. Enrique Gallegos Venero, one of the young radical colonels behind the Velasco coup in 1968. And there, too, he continued to conspire, trying to play all sides.

Montesinos befriended several foreign journalists. One of them was married to a man with access to reliable information. Montesinos would occasionally give her a ride "in his big American car" from the Ministry to Military Region II's headquarters — the stronghold of the radical officers — to deliver documents taken from the ministry. "He would try to get information from me he couldn't get from my husband," she said. "He had those marvelous speakers in his car with a collection of Bach cassettes. ... He would leave me in his car,

7. "El Asesor," *Caretas*, No. 1163, June 10, 1991.

8. *Ibid*; also intelligence report sent by Army intelligence to Adm. Alfonso Panizo, chair of Joint Chiefs of Staff, July 13, 1990.

9. "El Asesor," *op. cit.*

10. Interview, September 19, 1992.

11. Interviews with participants at the meeting, 1987 and 1992.

12. Interview, fall 1992.



listening to the most marvelous things, while he went to do his thing." She remembers him as intellectually appealing: "He knew how to fish things up, and where ... but physically, he looked like a manipulator; he was very intelligent, but you could never trust him."<sup>13</sup>

The moderates who ousted Velasco and came to power in August 1975 with Gen. Francisco Morales Bermúdez also mistrusted Montesinos. They knew he had spied on the radicals, and they harbored misgivings about him. In mid-1976, the new commander-in-chief of the army, Gen. Guillermo Arbulú, ordered Montesinos transferred to "El Algarrobo," a remote garrison near the Ecuador border.

Suddenly, after three heady years as a key source of information and misinformation with access to the top levels of power, Montesinos became an ordinary captain in a desolate backwater posting. He grew reckless.

### To Disgrace and Prison

On August 27, after only two days at El Algarrobo, he requested sick leave, returned to Lima, stole a blank army travel form, falsified it, and went to the U.S. Embassy. There he received an official invitation to the U.S., which had either been on hold or was instantly arranged. On September 5, 1976, he illegally flew out of Lima as an official guest of the U.S. government.

Once in Washington, however, his stay was far from clandestine. Officially and inaccurately presented as "aide to Prime Minister Gen. Guillermo Arbulú," he met with, among others, Luigi Einaudi, then at the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department, and CIA Office of Current Intelligence officer, Robert Hawkins. He also spoke with an official Cuba hand about visiting Cuba, "as personal guest of Raúl Castro," and met with several academics both in Washington and Connecticut. When he gave a talk at the Inter-American Defense College, a Peruvian general spotted him and cabled Lima.<sup>14</sup>

On his return to Peru on September 21, 1976, Montesinos was immediately arrested, his house was searched, and his safe found and opened. After army counterintelligence looked inside, the search intensified and even the floor boards of his house were lifted up. A week later, a military tribunal cashiered him out of the army and ordered him confined to a military prison and guarded round-the-clock.

The U.S. Embassy responded meekly to Peru's strong protest to Montesinos' clandestine invitation: It regretted "the concern caused the Government of Peru by the invitation extended to a military officer. ... The Embassy agrees with the Ministry's suggestion that in the future the Foreign Min-

istry should be informed of such invitations extended to members of the Armed Forces of Peru."<sup>15</sup>

Montesinos' legal situation worsened. After reviewing the file, the military prosecutor, General Alberto Vargas Ruiz de Somocurcio, recommended that the charge include "treason to the fatherland," which carried a mandatory death sentence.<sup>16</sup> Within memory, no army officer had been convicted of that crime.

Montesinos' cousin, Sergio Cardenal, took charge of the defense. "I could talk with him only with an officer present throughout the interview. He was held in a room surrounded by soldiers at all times."<sup>17</sup>

In the end, General Vargas dropped the high treason charge: A conviction would have caused enormous embarrassment and destroyed Mercado Jarrín's good reputation in the army. Nonetheless, many, including former army intelligence chief Rafael Córdova and General Jarama, consider Montesinos a traitor. "I believe," said Jarama, "he did betray his fatherland."<sup>18</sup> On May 31, 1977, he was convicted of "falsehood" and "desertion of command," formally expelled from the army, and sentenced to one year in jail. He would emerge a disgraced civilian.

### Lawyer for Drug Organizations

Any possibility of a military career gone, Montesinos used his jail time to study law. Soon after he was freed, he graduated and briefly became partners with his cousin, Sergio Cardenal. After a few months, he began to prosper.

Montesinos saw that there were two main money-making crimes: fiscal fraud and cocaine trafficking, and he carved out a practice that took advantage of both. At each step of the judicial process,

corrupt police, prosecutors, judges, and jailers competed to extract the maximum in bribes and kickbacks. Montesinos integrated the process. He got police to identify the best cases and tailor their reports with the prosecution and trial in mind, built a network of allies and informants inside key institutions, and identified corrupt police and judges.

Within a few years, Montesinos became a sought-after legal and administrative strategist for drug traffickers, providing services that went far beyond the practice of law. He rented homes for Colombian traffickers, advised accessories of traffickers when to go into hiding, managed the disappearance of files of fugitive Colombian traffickers to prevent extradition requests, and in at least one case, produced falsified documents to buttress his defense of a cocaine

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*Within a few years of his release from prison, Montesinos became a sought-after legal and administrative strategist for drug traffickers, providing services far beyond the practice of law.*

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13. Interview, May 1992.

14. Visitor's Program Service, schedule for Montesinos, September 1976.

15. U.S. Embassy, letter to Peru's Foreign Ministry, October 12, 1976.

16. Source in the army. In 1979, an Air Force NCO, Julio Vargas Garayar, would be found guilty and shot even though the evidence was hotly disputed.

17. Interview, July 8, 1992.

18. Interview with Jarama, July 1992



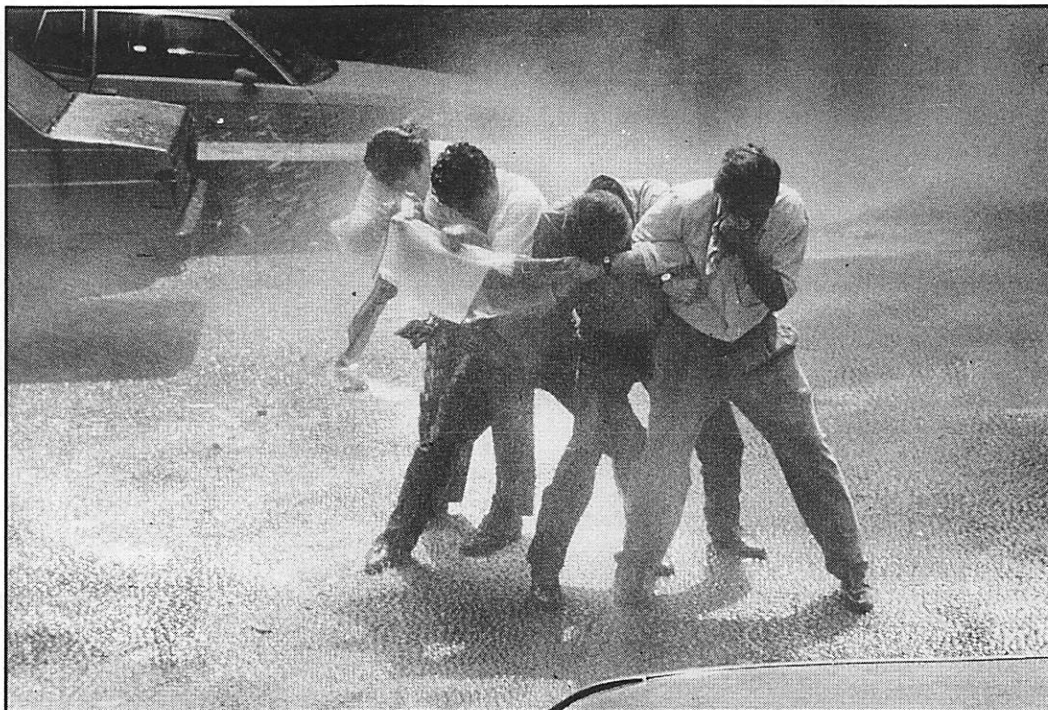
dealer.<sup>19</sup> (He lost that case thanks to a dogged prosecutor, who, years later, was one of the first people sacked in Fujimori's post-coup purge.) He also maintained contacts in the army, and through them was able to procure useful intelligence about high-ranking army officers whom he smeared in a column he anonymously wrote for a now defunct Lima tabloid.

The high command was enraged and in 1983 ordered its prosecutor, General Abraham Talavera, to revive the 1976 high treason accusation. For the second time, Montesinos was identified, disgraced, a fugitive. He fled the country to Ecuador and then to Argentina. Rid of the nuisance, the army's command lost interest. Talavera complained bitterly, to no avail.

This time, however, Montesinos had his share of allies. While he was abroad, colleagues in corruption rallied on his behalf.<sup>20</sup> In mid-1984, the Supreme Military Council, by then staffed with some lawyers who worked on the side for Montesinos, exonerated him of all charges. He returned quietly to Lima and resumed his work. For the army, however, even by their loosened standards, he remained a pariah. In July 1985, then-army commander-in-chief, Guillermo Monzón, upgraded an order banning Montesinos from any army installation.

### Defending Corrupt Police

For the drug mafia, on the other hand, Montesinos' handle on the system made him almost indispensable. There are major



Caretas

After Fujimori's April 1992 *auto-golpe* or self-coup, the army shut down parliament and drove off congressmembers who attempted to enter the building.

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*He literally became a man of the shadows;  
he could touch almost anyone from there,  
but no one could touch him.*

---

differences in the way corruption, including cocaine trafficking, works in Peru and Colombia. In Colombia, traffickers try to keep the state at arm's length. In Peru, they try to infiltrate it. Thus, media exposure has tremendous power to force the healthier parts of the state to act. In July 1985, the biggest Peruvian

narcotics trafficking organization was uncovered, in part because of an accidental cocaine lab explosion, and to a large extent through investigations by Peru's leading news magazine, *Caretas*.<sup>21</sup>

They revealed that Reynaldo Rodríguez López's drug or-

ganization had thoroughly infiltrated the state, especially the police.<sup>22</sup> Sparked by the media revelations, the public outcry was immediate. The energetic attorney general, César Elejalde, put the full resources of his organization behind the investigation, which was led by smiling but tough police general, Raúl Chávez. A year later, in 1986, with fugitive Rodríguez López arrested and in jail, they felt close to the Mafia's core.

19. Cecilia Valenzuela, "Cuando el abogado 8000 no podía arreglarlo todo," *Caretas*, September 10, 1992.

20. In February 1984, Manuel Angel del Pomar, then president of an association of lawyers, published a communiqué in defense of Montesinos. Del Pomar went on to become a member of parliament. In 1987, he was exposed by Interpol and Peruvian police as a leading member of an international cocaine ring, expelled from parliament, and went into hiding. But in 1990, on Fujimori's first day in office, the police general who had investigated the ring, General Félix García Núñez, was summarily expelled from the police. Del Pomar was exonerated after Fujimori's coup.

21. *Caretas*, various issues from July 1985 through 1988.

22. All three commanders-in-chief of the investigative police (the Peruvian counterpart to the FBI) from 1980-85 had been members or trusted collaborators of the organization. One chief of the paramilitary *Guardia Civil* police was also compromised. Others involved were a former chief of SIN, the personal advisor to a former minister of the interior and prime minister, at least one bank, scores of high-ranking police officers, many businesspeople, and one Supreme Court justice. The apparent chief of the organization, Reynaldo Rodríguez López, was an obscure accountant with a penchant for keeping meticulous records, whatever the subject. The passports of three Italian mafiosi, for instance, who were killed a few hours after arriving in Lima, were found, neatly classified in his office.



But Montesinos had taken charge of the defense of the more important corrupt police generals and soon it became known that he coordinated the defense strategy of the organization as a whole. In July 1986, he had Gen. Chávez sued in a military court because of this investigation, accusing him of "insulting a superior officer." The military court, to everyone's astonishment, accepted the argument and opened trial proceedings against Chávez and his key subordinates.

It took a strong journalistic campaign to shame the military judges into stopping the trial. But a barrage of judicial accusations, 14 in all, accepted by corrupt judges, slowed down Chávez's investigation. He, his top lieutenants — and their relatives — received threatening phone calls. Chávez even had a running shoot-out with members of a band of killers for hire. He walked everywhere with a sub-machine gun ready at his side.

In 1987, before the investigation could be completed, Attorney General Elejalde was succeeded by Hugo Denegri. It soon became evident he had an unofficial but key advisor. Cautiously keeping a low profile, Vladimiro Montesinos was back again. In Denegri, he found an individual occupying a position that was well beyond his capabilities, but not beyond his ambitions for power.

Denegri sabotaged Gen. Chávez's investigation at once. In February 1987, he replaced all the prosecutors and put two of Montesinos' close friends in charge of the case. They essentially killed the investigation and accused Chávez, of all things, of "drug trafficking." To no avail, both Chávez and Elejalde denounced Montesinos' role and his unseemly and close connection with Denegri. By 1988, many of the important members of the drug trafficking organization were guaranteed impunity. Montesinos now had the run of the attorney general's office, and that fact alone tremendously strengthened his position in the police and the judiciary.

Still, the armed forces remained forbidden territory for him. That year, however, an opening presented itself.

### Fixing the Coverup on the Cayara Massacre

In May 1988, a Shining Path unit ambushed an army convoy in Cayara district in the southern part of Ayacucho province, the

cradle of the guerrilla insurgency. By this time, the Maoist insurgents influenced significant areas in the Andes and upper jungle while at the same time gradually increasing activity in the cities. In the Cayara attack, they killed four soldiers and wounded 14 others. General José Valdivia, an artillery officer nicknamed "el Mariscalito," the Little Marshal, ordered patrols

to converge on the area and mete out punishment. On May 14, seven patrols entered the town of Cayara and wreaked havoc. Inside the church, where cowering townspeople had taken refuge, they separated the men from women and children and killed five men on the spot.

One of the other patrols that had fanned out into the surrounding countryside intercepted a group of peasants. They again separated the men and began a hasty interrogation-torture session, which escalated into mass murder as 24 peasants were clubbed, axed, or knifed to death. Three survived.

That night, the place swarming with soldiers, a wounded man was apprehended, along with an 80-year-old woman. They were never seen again.

Four days later, Gen. Valdivia flew in a helicopter to Cayara and ordered the population to gather. He read a list of alleged Shining Path sympathizers and asked those named to step forward. None did. Later that day, however, three on the list were captured by a military patrol. Soon after being seen alive on May 20, their corpses were found.<sup>23</sup>

News of the killings arrived in Lima, and the outcry was immediate. Although Peru had become one of the more notorious human rights violators in the world, press freedom and democratic institutions made it possible to investigate and sometimes to prosecute those responsible for the more blatant atrocities. In Lima, a Senate commission was appointed to investigate the massacre; and in Ayacucho, prosecutor Carlos Escobar began collecting damaging evidence on Valdivia. He was encouraged by acting Attorney General Manuel Catacora, standing in for Denegri, who was on a trip to Europe.

Valdivia was panicking. Every time he tried to erase traces of the crimes, he entangled himself further. He got into a



Oscar Medrano P.

**Gen. José Valdivia was implicated in the Cayara massacre, and along with Montesinos plotted the self-coup.**

23. "Demanda de la Comisión Interamericana por Derechos Humanos Contra el Estado del Perú por Hechos Ocurredos a Partir del 14 de Mayo de 1988 en el Distrito de Cayara," undated lawsuit, Interamerican Commission on Human Rights.



macabre race of burying and disinterring corpses, trying to keep ahead of the prosecutor's investigation. At that point, the army high command stepped in to help with the coverup. "We didn't want yet another general disgraced," said a former high ranking military officer, "so we sent two generals from the second military region to tidy things up."<sup>24</sup>

But Escobar's investigation had gone too far for a conventional whitewash to work. Despite the obvious personal danger, Escobar had witnesses, cohesive written testimony, and plans to dig deeper. For the military, Escobar had become the problem.

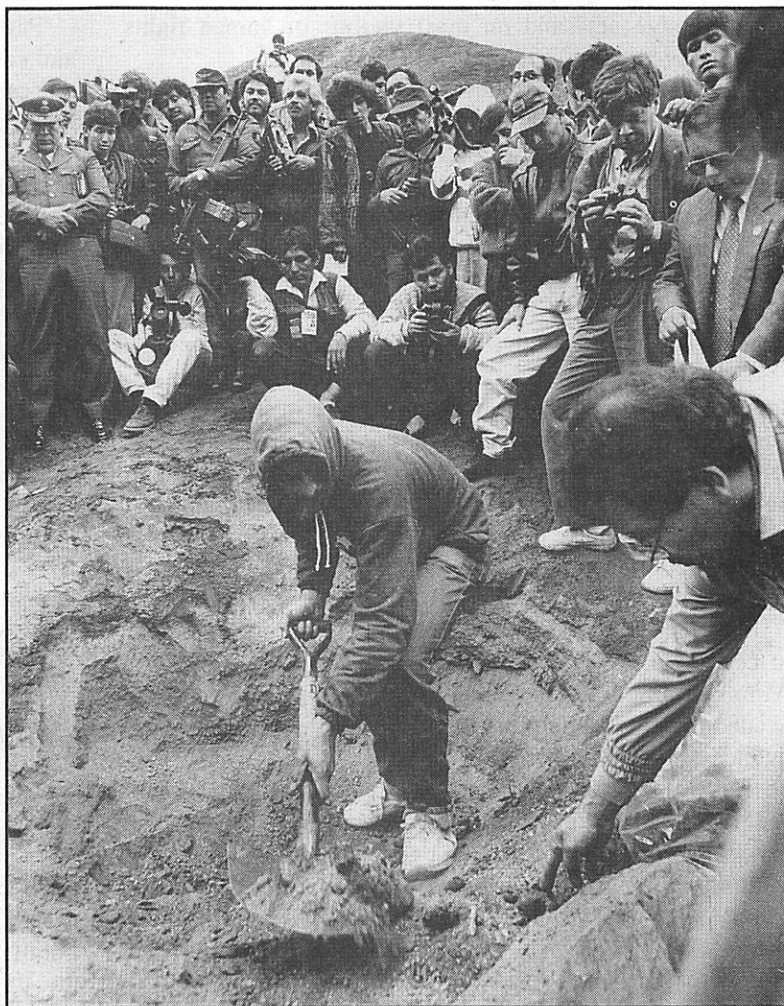
At that point, Montesinos began to advise artillery officer Valdivia. Attorney General Denegri was summoned from Rome, and in July 1988, Montesinos, Denegri, and two staffers met in a Lima restaurant to plan the removal of Escobar from the case and engineer impunity for Gen. Valdivia.<sup>25</sup>

At Montesinos' prodding, Denegri set up a meeting on army grounds with the defense minister, Gen. Enrique López Albújar, to propose a solution. It was agreed he would bring along an unnamed advisor. It was Montesinos. He was stopped at the gate where his photograph was on display, high and visible, with instructions to bar his access to any military installation. López Albújar was informed, and agonized over what to do. Also on hand was his own advisor, Gen. Talavera, the man who had accused Montesinos of high treason. But the stakes were too high, and he let Montesinos in.

Talavera didn't open his mouth during the lunch, but Montesinos was in a genial mood. Rather than discuss tactical details of the coverup to follow, the meeting was simply a first step — in a collaboration, and in yet another comeback for Montesinos.<sup>26</sup>

The coverup was direct and brutal. Although the badly harassed Escobar managed to submit a report in November 1988 accusing Valdivia and demanding that he should be brought to trial, he was ordered to hand over all information and was removed from the case. Then, Montesinos surreptitiously took the Cayara file containing Escobar's reports from the prosecutors' office and delivered it to officers of Valdivia's staff, who copied it, made some changes, and planned their actions.<sup>27</sup>

In December 1988, three witnesses essential to the case were assassinated by hooded men at a highway roadblock. Another witness managed to survive a while longer. Martha Crisóstomo García was assassinated in Ayacucho in September 1989. A little earlier, a prosecutor almost as ductile as his boss conducted a new review and closed the case. Prosecutor



Victor Ch. Vargas

The 1992 killings at La Cantuta became "the most important human rights case," said Robin Kirk, "... not because of the number of corpses or the gravity of the affair, but because it is the case where the relationship to the executive is the clearest." After much pressure, Montesinos' coverup crumbled as investigators found the graves and a trail that led to the top.

Escobar, who was persistently followed and threatened, asked the U.S. government for asylum. Valdivia's military career continued its ascent, thoroughly influenced by and indebted to Montesinos.

### A Match Made in Hell

Montesinos' next move was to reestablish contact with the intelligence services. His old friends Rafael Merino and Francisco Loayza worked at the National Intelligence Service, as a senior analyst and a part-time analyst respectively. Both persuaded intelligence chief General Edwin Díaz that Montesinos could be of use.<sup>28</sup>

And indeed, at the end of 1989, Montesinos presented the reluctant Díaz with his ticket back into the fold: detailed files from the attorney general's office on all people ever accused

24. Interview with a military source, June 1992.

25. Interviews with participants, June 1992; Cecilia Valenzuela, interview with former attorney general Denegri, *Caretas*, No. 1225, August 27, 1992.

26. Interviews with military intelligence source, 1990-92

27. Interview with military intelligence source, 1992.

28. Interviews with sources from National Intelligence Service (SIN), May-July 1992.



of subversive acts and on most victims of human rights abuses; seven or eight thousand of them.<sup>29</sup>

Almost every day, Montesinos, now a collaborator on the SIN's payroll, arrived at the intelligence agency offices carrying packages of files, which were promptly computerized.

He was back on the inside and finally positioned to access the highest power — if he could pick the right person to back. As elections to replace discredited President Alan García approached, few people in Peru doubted that writer Mario Vargas Llosa would win. At SIN, both Merino and Loayza were moonlighting as advisors to the Vargas Llosa camp.

Then, among the also-rans in the 1990 elections, an obscure candidate showed a modest increase in the polls. Alberto Fujimori, a gray academic, compensated for an unremarkable intellect with an uncommon craftiness. Although he aimed at a Senate seat, he ran his own presidential ballot to achieve better name recognition. When he finished a surprising second, a run-off between him and Vargas Llosa was scheduled.

President García directed SIN to cooperate with the candidate. Almost immediately, Fujimori needed the kind of help the intelligence agency could provide. Investigations revealed that the candidate had a plethora of embarrassing problems. The García government had given him a farm previously expropriated in the name of agrarian reform. And, more seriously, the candidate of "Honesty, Technology, and Work" was revealed as pertinaciously fraudulent in underpaying his taxes and undervaluing sales in the real estate business that he operated with his wife. After compiling a file, a congress deputy formally asked the attorney general to open criminal charges against the candidate.

When Fujimori's camp despaired of finding a clean way out, General Díaz ordered Montesinos to help the afflicted candidate. In a short time, more than one witness was persuaded to modify his testimony and the files were "fixed" by subservient prosecutors. Then, sanitized documents in hand, Montesinos went to the worried Fujimori to tell him that he no longer had a problem but a solution.<sup>30</sup> The effects of that visit endure to this day.

According to a National Intelligence Service source, the sanitized documents

were given to Montesinos. It was a nice work. ... We looked for effect. We knew that Fujimori would be worried to death, consulting over the problem; and suddenly Vladimiro would appear with the solution which would instantly save his political life. Could the SIN begin this relationship on better footing?<sup>31</sup>

29. According to a later interview with Pedro Méndez, the attorney general who succeeded Denegri, the transfer of information from the *Fiscalía* to the SIN wasn't entirely clandestine. Montesinos had also become an advisor.

30. SIN source, July 1992.

31. *Ibid.*

Fujimori and his wife Susana were more than impressed and saw Montesinos, not SIN, as their savior. Montesinos, one can safely assume, was not unhappy with the credit, and the debt it implied.

Yet, as Fujimori's political fortunes skyrocketed, he remained frightened and insecure. He became increasingly dependent on the clandestine resources that General Díaz and Montesinos could provide. Díaz offered not only his own secret polls, but also wiretapping transcriptions and updated intelligence. But it was Montesinos who, after accompanying Díaz on most of his visits, would return later alone; a nighttime semi-clandestine visitor to Fujimori's, or his sister's, home.

Máximo San Román, Fujimori's running mate who later became president of the Senate, remembers the visits before the runoff. "He came at night, close to eleven, and went straight to the house of Fujimori's sister, where Fujimori would be waiting alone."<sup>32</sup> The almost nightly assignations cemented a symbiotic relationship between the paranoid outlook of the candidate and the conspiratorial feedback of the intriguer.

After Fujimori's sweeping victory, Montesinos convinced Fujimori that his life was in danger, and persuaded him to move to the *Círculo Militar*, the army officer's social club, which was guarded by army troops. It was a calculated gamble Montesinos won when, as Fujimori's "personal advisor," he was granted open access to the army facilities from which he had been banned in disgrace. Those few who openly opposed Montesinos' reinstatement into the ranks of the respectable incurred substantial risk. Montesinos convinced the elected president of a web of plots to unseat or kill him. In a self-fulfilling prophecy, Fujimori accepted Montesinos' enemies as his own.

### Montesinos Plays Mephisto

On July 28, 1990, when Fujimori became the president of Peru, Montesinos instigated the purges of those "mutual" enemies. One of them, army intelligence chief Colonel Rafael Córdova, for whom Montesinos' growing influence was an abomination, was preemptorily sacked from the position and sent into retirement. The new Minister of the Interior found himself with a list of close to 100 police officials to dismiss, including those who had investigated Rodríguez López, the drug-deputy del Pomar, and one of the most efficient anti-drug operatives among the police, General Juan Zárate Gambini.

People linked to Montesinos were named to crucial posts in the army, the police, and the interior and justice ministries. General Valdivia (who had been saved by Montesinos in connection with the Cayara massacre) was named head of the crucial Military Region II. He dedicated himself, along with

(continued on p. 54)

32. Interview, July 25, 1992.



Reuters/Bettman

# Turabi's Muslim Brothers: Theocracy in Sudan

Alex de Waal

“

*I am the symbol of a new movement that would change the history of humanity.*

”

Hassan al Turabi, the most influential political theorist and leader in the world of Islam since the death of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini.

**T**he explosion that rocked the World Trade Center on February 26, 1993, collapsed the already weakened structure of relations between the U.S. and Sudan. Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, the blind Egyptian cleric arrested by the FBI, carried a Sudanese passport. Three others charged with him were citizens of that East African country known mainly for its famine, its abysmal human rights record, and its decade-long civil war. President Clinton's July 1993 declaration that Sudan was responsible for sponsoring international terrorism culminated a long process in which Sudan went from valued U.S. client state to international pariah.

The hostility is understandable but the label of terrorist is simplistic and dangerous. Since seizing power in a military

coup in June 1989, the government of Lt.-Gen. Omer al Bashir has perpetrated an extraordinary range of human rights abuses, including a near-genocidal war in the South and the Nuba Mountains. The country suffers recurrent man-made famine. This winter, while the Sudanese people faced widespread starvation, the government was exporting the last of its food reserves for sale to Europe as animal feed.<sup>1</sup>

Central to the Sudanese government's ostracism is its aggressive policy of promoting political Islam at home and abroad.<sup>2</sup> At home, the imposition of Islamic law — by exacerbating division between the non-Islamic South and the Arab-dominated North — has been a fundamental cause of the civil

1. Preliminary estimates indicate a shortfall of 700,000 metric tons of cereal from the 1993 harvest, matched by the export of 700,000 tons of sorghum.

2. The common term "fundamentalism" is inaccurate and misleading. A more accurate term is "Islamic absolutism." All devout Muslims espouse the fundamental "five pillars" of Islam. Political extremists, however, hold that Islam contains

Alex de Waal, co-director of London-based Africa Rights, has spent considerable time in the Horn of Africa. He is author of *Famine That Kills: Darfur, Sudan, 1984-85* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).





Michael Isaac

**While in exile in Saudi Arabia, Turabi sought to recruit not only educated elites, but also workers and owners of small businesses.**

war. Internationally, Sudan's support for radical political Islam in Egypt, Algeria, and elsewhere has served to antagonize both Western and secular Arab nations.

Within this context, branding Sudan a terrorist state and isolating it as a pariah plays into the hands of Sudanese President Omer al Bashir: It gives his government a domestic propaganda tool by formalizing a Manichean struggle between the West and Islam. It also ignores the role of the U.S. — through that particularly American combination of arrogant naiveté and self-serving cynicism — in fostering those same forces it now brands international outlaws and terrorists.

### The Rise of Hassan al Turabi

Several themes, and one man, recur with the persistence of poverty throughout the 30-odd year saga of U.S.-Sudan relations. Played sometimes in concert, sometimes in cacophonous opposition were the U.S. anticommunist crusade and the Islamic anticommunist jihad, the machinations of international finance and local greed, the geopolitical strategy of the West, and the power dynamic within Sudan and the Islamic world.

The name that resonates throughout is that of Dr. Hassan Abdulla al Turabi — mastermind of Sudanese political Islam, spiritual power behind the military regime, and leader of the Muslim Brothers. Asked for his response to being

the answer to every political and social question, permitting no dissent. This absolute adherence to political Islam, and the absolutist governments it produces, are aptly termed "Islamic absolutism." See Alex de Waal, "Sudan: Searching for the Origins of Absolutism and Decay," *Development and Change*, January 1993.

labeled the "godfather of international terrorism" by some of his Sudanese and Western opponents, Turabi responded, "I know why they call me that; I am the symbol of a new movement that would change the history of humanity."<sup>3</sup>

Turabi rallies support with his openly anti-Western stance. "He urges his followers to oppose enemies of Islam in the West with all their strength and to drive fear into their [the West's] hearts."<sup>4</sup>

The U.S., in turn, vehemently disavows Turabi. It was not always so. Between the 1960s and mid-1980s, although there is no evidence that Turabi received direct funding, the Muslim Brothers had a tacit alliance with the State Department. Despite differing goals and political strategies, their interests converged in several areas: anti-communism, strategic interest in the Horn of Africa, oil, international finance, and the war in Afghanistan. Bilateral cooperation over these issues smoothed Turabi's rise to power.

And a spectacular but bumpy rise it has been. Also known as "Islam's Lenin," Turabi seeks not only to head an Islamic state in Sudan, but also to lead an Islamic movement that wields power across the Arab

world and unifies the Third World's hundreds of millions of, mostly poor, Muslims. He has made astonishing progress in achieving those goals. Since he took over leadership of the Brothers in 1969, it has grown from an obscure fanatic sect to the power that rules Sudan, sets the international Islamic agenda, and wields significant influence in Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Yemen, Jordan, and the Israeli Occupied Territories.

### Turabi and the Muslim Brothers

Hassan al Turabi is now the most influential political theorist and leader in the world of Islam since the death of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini. His current reputation in the West is as a stereotypical fanatic. During the Cold War, however, when he was useful to the West, he was seen as a moderate. In fact, neither designation is accurate. A complex and articulate advocate of political Islam, Turabi has written widely on a liberal agenda for modern Islam and argued that Islam should favor the emancipation of women, stress the importance of art and drama, and support religious tolerance. His lectures are delivered with style and wit, his message is both stimulating and reassuring. But at base, he is a skilled strategist, a calculating opportunist. While Turabi still advocates these liberal stances to Western audiences, his government enforces veiling women, banning unaccompanied women academics from traveling abroad, and censorship of politically or morally offensive material.

3. Canadian Broadcasting Company, "Seeds of Terror," *Fifth Estate*, February 1, 1994.

4. *Ibid.*

After studying in London and completing his doctorate in law at the Sorbonne in 1964, Turabi returned to Sudan and became active in the Muslim Brothers, a branch of the small, secretive organization dedicated to furthering political Islam across the Arab world. He was the antithesis of the introverted purists who were his main rivals in the movement. In April 1969, after much infighting, he won control of the movement. He had little time to build a domestic base of support. Barely a month later, the Brothers were consigned to the political wilderness by a left-wing military coup headed by Col. Jaafar Nimeiri. This swift change in fortune was the first of several dramatic reverses. And while he and his organization have thrived through coup, famine, and war, his country has barely survived.

### Base of Support

In exile in Saudi Arabia where he fled, Turabi continued to shape the Muslim Brothers and sharpen his strategy. He did not believe he could win power by military force. His organization had no weapons and little support among heavy drinking, womanizing soldiers. Instead, he developed a broad recruitment strategy. The key element was a base of support in civil society. Although he focused on Sudan for various reasons — the largest number of professionals in Saudi Arabia are Sudanese — Turabi had wider ambitions from the start. Saudi Arabia held many opportunities. The cosmopolitan elite of the Arab countries had descended on Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states after the 1973 oil boom. Many of the professionals, civil servants, and businessmen, including 350,000 Sudanese, would provide powerful backing for the Muslim Brothers in the future. The Brothers invested in the future: They funded students, sending the brightest to Western universities for their Ph.D.s.<sup>5</sup> Gradually, well-organized cliques of Muslim Brothers began to take over the bar associations, writers' unions, medical associations, universities, and civil services of Arab countries.

Nor did the Brothers overlook the bottom rung of the socioeconomic ladder. Its humanitarian arm, the Islamic African Relief Agency, staffed mostly with Sudanese, worked among the numerous small, forgotten communities of Muslims across sub-Saharan Africa.

Above all, Turabi used the mosques as centers for meeting, teaching and disseminating information.<sup>6</sup> Islam was the crucial organizing center, the core of unity.

### Holy Money

Turabi's strategy required money. In Saudi Arabia, it flowed like oil. Through the Islamic banks, the Muslim Brothers were able to corner much of the lucrative market in remittances home from migrants in the Gulf, and gain both supporters and profits. These banks also took advantage of tax concessions available to "Islamic" organizations. The Saudi-based Faisal Islamic

Bank was the first to be set up in the mid-1970s; others have followed. Using Faisal Islamic Bank, Turabi targeted and won over a previously neglected economic sector. He made loans available to small, self-employed businessmen — such as taxi drivers and small shopkeepers — through Islamic banks which do not pay interest on deposits, but lend without interest and share profits with depositors.

The Muslim Brothers were also generously financed by the Saudi government, which wanted to promote its own brand of worldwide Islam. In the 1970s, Saudi Arabia opposed Nasserism in Egypt and looked on the Muslim Brothers as fellow travelers. After the 1979 attack on Mecca, when the Saudis began

to realize what they had unleashed, they adopted a strategy of cooptation by handing out money indiscriminately.

### Playing the Cold War Game

While the Brothers took advantage of exile in Saudi Arabia to build an international network, the climate in Sudan underwent a series of changes. After Nimeiri seized power in 1969, he played the Cold War game by first allying with Moscow and then switching sides. In 1976, he made the key opening to the West. (Three years later, Sudan was the sole member of the Arab League to support the Camp David agreement between Israel and Egypt.)

Meanwhile, in Saudi Arabia, Turabi was playing his own game, biding his time and building his base. Anticommunism may have been the ideological foundation of his politics, but pragmatism was its touchstone. In 1977, when President Nimeiri abandoned his earlier radical stance and offered "National Reconciliation" to his former enemies, other op-



Government of Sudan

**Nimeiri ran an extraordinary government of opportunists, military officers on the make, a few leftover left-wing idealists, and the Muslim Brothers.**

5. Five Sudanese Ph.D.s in electoral studies advised the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front's 1992 election campaign.

6. Abdel Wahab al Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (London: Grey Seal Books), 1991.



# Civil War and Famine in Sudan

**"The tens of thousands of deaths from starvation would be a small price to pay for upholding the Islamic Revolution in Sudan." — Turabi<sup>1</sup>**

**M**any in Sudan disagree with that assessment. For a decade, their country has been ensnared in a web of civil war and famine.

The war is now being portrayed, by Turabi and the Western media alike, as a religious/ethnic struggle between the mainly Muslim, Arab-ruled North and the African, predominantly Christian or traditional deist South. Rather than fully defining the conflict, the differences coincide with those of wealth and power: The Khartoum-based Muslim Arabs dominate the country's economic and political life. The war started when the South mounted an armed struggle for a secular state with a more equitable distribution of rights and wealth, but has since become a war of independence, of self-determination.<sup>2</sup>

In the 19th century, southern Sudan was the hinterland for Khartoum-based traders in ivory and slaves. The advent of British colonial rule in 1898 did nothing to overcome the historical antagonism between north and south. While ruling through existing political and religious institutions in the North, the British opted to isolate the South from all Arab and Muslim influence.

Britain never had a coherent policy for the South. In practice, separate development meant no development. As Sudan rushed to independence after World War II, there were literally only a handful of educated southerners from a region with no schools, hospitals or economic development apart from those provided by a few Christian missions. A separate Southern state and union with Uganda were mooted, but the southerners were persuaded to join with the North with the promise of a federal constitution. On the eve of independence in 1956, however, when it was clear that the pledge would be violated, southern army units mutinied and staged an insurrection that evolved into a struggle for independence. The first round of civil war ended in 1972, when President Nimeiri agreed to grant autonomous status to the South.

Within a decade, Nimeiri effectively abrogated the agreement by dividing the South into three separate regions. A few months later, in 1983, he solidified the estrangement between North and South by imposing *sharia*, or Islamic law.

**O**nce again, revolution came from within the ranks of the military. Army officer John Garang led a mutiny of southern Sudanese army troops which became the nucleus of the SPLA. A Christian Dinka, the rebel leader Garang

received U.S. military training at Fort Benning and a Ph.D. in economics from Iowa State University.<sup>3</sup>

From the outset, Garang was committed to a unitary Sudanese state and demanded a constitutional convention involving all Sudanese parties and groups. This proposal gained widespread support, but was effectively blocked by Turabi's National Islamic Front and its refusal to suspend *sharia*, one of the SPLA's central demands. With the deepening of political estrangement between North and South under the al Bashir government, the SPLA has revised its agenda, and now calls for an independent southern state.

**A**lthough weakened by splits and military setbacks, the SPLA controls most of the Southern countryside, confining the army to garrison towns. That some of this land is rich in oil reserves has aggravated the strife. At least two oil companies, U.S.-based Chevron and France-based Total, have concessions; Chevron alone has invested \$1.7 billion in developing Sudan's oilfields.

The single largest oilfield lies just south of the North-South boundary, and Nimeiri's 1983 efforts to syphon potential profits to Khartoum contributed to hostilities. In a move that could not have been more calculated to inflame tensions, he sent in militias — partly paid for by Chevron to protect oil installations<sup>4</sup> — made up of Misiriya Arabs, who have a historical antagonism to the Southerners.<sup>5</sup> The militias have been implicated in the resurgence of slavery and, together with Khartoum regular troops, have killed tens of thousands of people and wreaked havoc throughout the region.<sup>6</sup>

This toll is only part of the devastation. The majority have succumbed to starvation, inextricably tied to the decade of fighting. Khartoum simultaneously denies a famine exists and uses it as an instrument of war.

War and famine have created approximately four million internal refugees, with roughly half of them subsisting in miserable camps on the outskirts of Khartoum and several hundred thousand more living in government-controlled areas of the South.

An additional 370,000 refugees have fled the country.<sup>7</sup> Relief programs seem powerless to stem the tide of this human suffering.

3. *Ibid.* p.5.

4. Interview with *Economist Intelligence Unit*, (London), 1989.

5. Based on information provided by former government officials, who prefer to remain anonymous.

6. See, for example, Amnesty International, *Sudan: Human Rights Violations in the Context of Civil War* (London: Amnesty International, 1989).

7. U.S. Committee for Refugees, "World Refugee Survey," 1994.

1. *Sudan Democratic Gazette*, April 1991, p. 4; cited in Beniah Yongo-Bure, "Sudan's Deepening Crisis," *Middle East Report*, September-October 1991, p. 11.

2. Martha Wenger, "Sudan Politics Society — A MERIP Primer," *Middle East Report*, September-October 1991, p. 3.

position parties saw dealing with the discredited dictator as sipping from a poisoned chalice. Turabi, however, saw a chance to seize the moment and jumped for it. He returned to Sudan and for the following eight years and was able to stamp his influence on all sections of Sudanese society. With him came the Muslim Brothers' cadre and the Islamic banks. From his position as attorney general, he put his men in key positions throughout the civil service, media and business sectors, and even began to infiltrate the army.

Nimeiri ran an extraordinary government of opportunists, military officers on the make, a few leftover left-wing idealists, and the Muslim Brothers. He was a mercurial figure, obscenely corrupt and increasingly given over to making policy on the basis of his dreams and other messages he said he received from Allah.<sup>7</sup> Abandoning heavy drinking in 1983 did not make the dictator more predictable. Despite his erratic political behavior, the U.S. still saw him as an important strategic ally. A steady flow of dollars greased the wheels of a corrupt political patronage machine and enabled him and his successors to wage war on the South. The U.S., in turn, got what it paid for: Nimeiri's loyalty and a regional base of operations.

### Nimeiri Declares Sharia

But Nimeiri didn't make life easy for his major donor. In 1983, he declared Islamic law — after a "revelation" that came in a dream. Turabi, who was apparently not consulted, had advocated a more cautious agenda. Nonetheless, he declared his support for *sharia* although he was reported to have fainted on observing his first official amputation.

The U.S. was prepared to go along with amputation for theft or with stoning for adultery — it tolerated them in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan — but Islamic economics was a different matter. Under Nimeiri's reforms, the accounting year was based on a 354-day Islamic calendar, charging interest was prohibited, and all taxes were abolished and replaced with a tithe. For a country already in economic peril, it spelled catastrophe. The reforms yielded low tax revenues and rendered coherent economic planning difficult. More important, they threatened Western financial interests. A secret June 1984 U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) report evaluated the impact of Islamic law. With no mention of

7. Mansour Khalid, *Nimeiri and the Revolution of Dis-May* (London: Kegan Paul, 1985).



Crispin Hughes/Impact Visuals

Fighter from Garang faction of the SPLA is part of a decade-long civil war.

human rights, it stressed the negative impact on the business community and the deterrent effect on foreign investment.<sup>8</sup>

The reforms also made it impossible to monitor the Sudanese government's adherence to promised IMF structural adjustments. By 1984, Sudan was in perpetual financial crisis and in constant need of bailing out. Although it had been receiving about \$1 billion per year in international aid, including \$150 million from the U.S.,<sup>9</sup> its debt reached \$8 billion. Donors resorted to extraordinary financial contortions to keep the aid flowing. That February, the State Department diverted \$18 million in AID money to pay IMF arrears which had reached crisis proportions. When Congress learned of the misuse of funds, it blocked further efforts by the State Department to intervene on Sudan's behalf with the IMF. The Department of State circumvented the decision by taking out a commercial bridging loan, which it paid directly to the IMF; the IMF then released \$20 million to the Sudan, which promptly recycled it to repay the State Department's bridging loan. This "masterpeice of financial juggling" demonstrated not only the vulnerability of the IMF to U.S. political pressure, but serious policy differences that Congress and the Treasury Department had with the State Department over Sudan.<sup>10</sup>

8. These conclusions were repeated and amplified in a 1985 report: A. E. Mayer, "Sudanese laws affecting the private sector and the economy: Assessment of legal developments from 1983 to mid-1985," U.S. AID, Khartoum, 1985.

9. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Geographical Breakdown of Financial Flows to Developing Countries* (Paris: OECD, 1987). In 1985, because of famine and refugee relief, the figure for U.S. aid rose to \$374 million.

10. Richard Brown, "A background note on the final round of economic austerity measures imposed by the Nimeiri regime: June 1984-March 1985," in Tony Barnett and Abbas Abdelkarim, eds., *Sudan: State, Capital and Transformation* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), pp. 76-77.



## The CIA in Sudan

During this period, the U.S. found solace in two sources of stability: the security forces with their links to the CIA, and the Muslim Brothers led by Turabi.

Turabi tread a careful line. An influential if small coterie within the State Department welcomed the Brothers as a serious conservative movement, sympathetic to Western business interests and viscerally hostile to communism.<sup>11</sup> Turabi took pains to distance himself from the intolerance of the Ayatollahs, to stress his favorable attitude toward the West, and to present himself as the acceptable face of conservative Islam. He reaped his reward: A marriage of convenience with the State Department provided the Brothers with opportunities for economic and political advantage.

Those opportunities grew along with U.S. concern over Soviet influence. The region was home to various liberation struggles, large oil reserves, and the increasingly troublesome Libyan leader, Muammar Qaddafi. Sandwiched between Marxist Ethiopia and "terrorist" Libya and across the sea from communist South Yemen, Sudan was a key piece in the strategic jigsaw of the Red Sea area.<sup>12</sup> In 1980, it became Africa's leading recipient of U.S. aid; from 1982 to 1985, military assistance alone topped \$100 million a year.<sup>13</sup>

Not surprisingly, Sudan was rumored to be the location of the largest CIA station in sub-Saharan Africa. Key to Agency access and influence was that other solace to U.S. policy makers, the security forces. Col. el Fatih Erwa, head of External Security and expert on the Horn of Africa, was a longtime CIA asset. He liaised with the Ethiopian and Eritrean rebel fronts and had helped with various CIA operations. He coordinated the Sudanese side of the U.S. operation to rescue the Falasha Jews from Ethiopia and airlift them to Israel.<sup>14</sup> (When then-Vice-President George Bush visited refu-

gee camps in Sudan in March 1985, ostensibly to see the starving for himself, the first item on his agenda was resuming the Falasha airlift which had been abruptly halted in January when it became public.<sup>15</sup> Among his hosts was Erwa.) While considered an apolitical opportunist, his cousin Mahjoub was a leading figure in the Muslim Brothers.

## The IMF Pulls Out the Rug

By November 1984, both Nimeiri and Turabi were in trouble. Treasury finally balked, aid was frozen, and the IMF was given a free hand to impose austerity measures. Nimeiri and the State Department began to see the Muslim Brothers as a political liability. Their insistence on Islamic law was proving even more unpopular at home than it was within the institutions of international finance.

In late March 1985, hoping to placate Washington and find a scapegoat for the country's financial and political problems, Nimeiri ordered the leading Muslim Brothers fired and had Turabi thrown in jail. A few days later, Nimeiri flew to Washington and met with Reagan, who had had the aid unfrozen, but it was too late.

In April 1985, just three weeks after the purge, food

shortages brought popular protests to the streets of Khartoum. These in turn sparked a military coup which ousted Nimeiri. As a *New York Times* editorial noted, the rug that was pulled from under Nimeiri's feet had "IMF" written on it.<sup>16</sup>

Once again, through a combination of luck and political skill, Turabi not only survived, but ended up with more power than before his fall. The luck, strangely enough, was being in prison when Nimeiri fell. Now Turabi could paint himself and his group as victims of the regime. The skill lay in having established a power base in the mosques, the secular political institutions, and the military elites. The Brothers represented a large part of Sudan's Muslims, while the ostensibly broad-based National Islamic Front (NIF) acted in "secular" democratic politics. But of even more immediate importance, Turabi had cultivated the army officers who led the coup, most importantly, Defense Minister Gen. Suwar el Dahab, its leader.<sup>17</sup>

The general's first act on seizing power was to send a military plane to Turabi's provincial prison and fly him back to Khartoum. Suwar el Dahab refused to abolish Islamic law and promised to hold elections. Confident that the conservative pro-Islamic parties would win, he kept his word.

In April, his prime minister, Sadiq el Mahdi, was elected president. A key component of his ruling coalition was

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*The U.S. has, over the years,  
sometimes deliberately and  
sometimes unwittingly, sponsored  
exactly those people whom it now  
condemns as terrorists.*

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11. The U.S. has consistently stationed at least one Arabist scholar in the Khartoum embassy with the specific brief of dealing with the Muslim Brothers. Several of these diplomats have proved sympathetic to political Islam.

12. Especially after these three Soviet-allied countries signed the Aden Pact in 1982, U.S. policy under Reagan was geared to maintaining the stability of the pro-Western states around them. The U.S.-coordinated "Operation Bright Star" in the Red Sea in 1982 made extensive use of Sudanese military facilities.

13. J.A. Lefebvre, "Globalism and regionalism: US arms transfers to Sudan," *Armed Forces and Society*, #17, 1991, pp. 211-27.

14. The Falasha are a community of perhaps 30,000 ethnic Ethiopians who practice a form of Judaism. Historically, they have aspired to migrate to Israel, an aspiration sharpened by their sufferings under Colonel Mengistu. Most important, they became the focus of intense attention from the Jewish lobby in the U.S. The result was a secret operation codenamed "Moses," begun in 1984, to smuggle the Falasha across the border to Sudan and fly them to Israel. Because Arab Sudan could not openly deal with Israel, the operation had to be concealed from the Sudanese public. Sudanese security forces resorted to elaborate ruses to hide their involvement. For instance, they faked car accidents to close the main highway near the Ethiopian border so that Hercules planes could land on the tarmac. (Information on Operation Moses is derived largely from the public hearings into the affair held in Khartoum in 1986-87.)

15. Ahmed Karadawi, "The Smuggling of Ethiopian Falasha to Israel through Sudan," *African Affairs* January 1991, p. 47.

16. "The Sudan After the Fall," editorial, *New York Times*, April 9, 1985, p. A 28.  
17. He has since emerged as the chair of a shadowy organization, "Committee for the Defense of Islam and the Nation," which supports Islamic militias in Sudan.

Turabi's NIF Party. After a year in opposition, Turabi joined the government and became attorney general. He continued to impress the Americans, telling them that NIF was the only "modern" (*i.e.*, non-sectarian) and nationwide party in Sudan and glossing over the total lack of support for it among the large non-Muslim minority. Above all, the implied contrast was to the Sudan Communist Party and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

### The U.S. Grows Frustrated

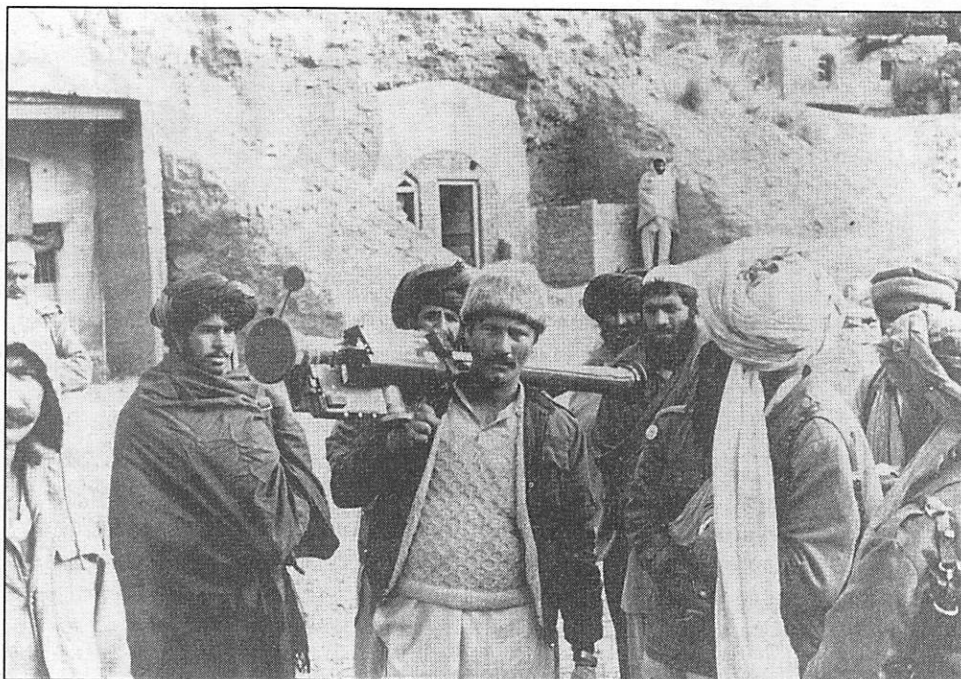
Some in the U.S. were growing frustrated. Rep. Mickey Leland (D-Texas) of the Select Committee on Hunger visited SPLA-controlled areas in October-November 1988. He was appalled by Mahdi's callous indifference to the famine which was devastating the South and drawing attention from international media.

(See box.) The congressman favored rapprochement with the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia, and a "more vigorous policy" to discipline Sudan.<sup>18</sup> The famine had been raging for three years, but this was the first time that a U.S. politician had charged that Sudanese government policies were largely to blame.

But Washington's bottom line remained anticommunism. Despite a temporary chill when Suwar el Dahab became cozy with Qaddafi, U.S. ties and aid were maintained and transferred to Mahdi. Although the State Department consistently requested more than Congress would approve, U.S. military assistance continued, albeit at a lower level — \$27 million in FY 1986 and about \$12 million a year until FY 1989.<sup>19</sup> Vice President Bush visited Sudan again in 1986, to mend fences after Mahdi condemned the U.S. air raid on Tripoli.<sup>20</sup>

In 1989, senior State Department officials were congratulating themselves on "unrestricted access to the highest levels of the Sudanese government."<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, U.S. Ambassador to Sudan Norman Anderson advocated increased military assistance to Sudan, saying, "We can't succeed on charm alone."<sup>22</sup>

For most of 1986-89, Turabi was a junior partner in Sadiq el Mahdi's government and his attorney general. Other Muslim Brothers took ministerial positions, ran the majority of Sudan's newspapers, built up a commanding position in the commercial sector, and organized cells within the army.



The CIA supplied Afghan guerrillas with Stinger surface-to-air missiles.

### The Afghani Connection

In the late 1970s, Turabi had prophesied the downfall of the "corrupt," "secular" regimes of the Arab world, especially those in North Africa. At the time, it seemed like fantasy.

Then Afghanistan changed everything. The Afghan war transformed the Islamic movement and the Brothers' prospects along with it; it provided fertile ground for recruiting, training, and financing an international phenomenon. Most significantly, it created the *mujahidin*, an Islamic army. A decade after the war's start in 1979, the Muslim world was filled with demobilized veterans, colloquially named "Afghanis." Their ranks included international volunteers from all over the Islamic world who had responded to the jihad. Courtesy of the CIA, they had access to almost unlimited supplies of weaponry and training in how to use it. The Reagan administration, in its anticommunist zeal, had opened a major aid artery and billions of dollars of covert and overt aid hemorrhaged to the anti-Soviet forces. The rising tide of violence from northern India to former Central Asia to the Mediterranean coast can all be directly traced to the weaponry so bountifully supplied to the Afghan resistance.

Afghanistan completely altered the Muslim Brothers. While never committed to the principle of nonviolence, in 1979 it had been a wholly civilian movement. After the war in Afghanistan wound down in 1989, thousands of the demobilized "Afghanis" linked up with the Muslim Brothers in every Islamic country from Bangladesh to Morocco, and began to put their skills to use for the cause. Some of their actions — such as selective assassinations in Egypt and Algeria — are part of the Brothers' centrally controlled strategy. Others

(continued on p. 60)

18. Congressional staff delegation to East Africa, October 15-November 1, "Conclusions and recommendations."

19. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*; *Economist Intelligence Unit*, "Sudan, Country Report No. 1," 1988.

20. The U.S. bombed Libya in retaliation for its alleged role in a 1986 terrorist bombing.

21. Kenneth Brown, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, March 2, 1989.

22. Quoted in *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, December 21, 1988.



# GLADIO:

## The Secret U.S. War to Subvert Italian Democracy

Arthur E. Rowse

**T**his January, Silvio Berlusconi rode onto the turbulent Italian political scene on a white charger. Voters had become disenchanted with long-time centrist leaders who were mired in massive corruption scandals. With crucial parliamentary elections only two months away and the likelihood that the left would win power for the first time since World War II,<sup>1</sup> the billionaire businessman entered the fray with a slate of right-wing candidates who had never held office. Helped by voter disgust and his own vast media and industrial holdings, Berlusconi's coalition won big, averting the anticipated leftist victory. His win lifted the right, including the neo-fascists, to new postwar heights.<sup>2</sup>

Real change seemed unlikely, however, as Berlusconi repackaged the old politics with new names and slogans. Berlusconi himself was weaned on the system and owed much of his success to Bettino Craxi, a former Socialist prime minister who went on trial for corruption the day after the March election. It wasn't long before the right's "clean hands" were upstaged by arms raised in fascist salutes and cries of "Il Duce."

While Berlusconi's rapid ascent took most observers by surprise, the stage was set for it by nearly 50 years of U.S. interference in Italian politics. In the name of fighting communism, the U.S. helped generate a level of political turmoil that sometimes approached civil war. U.S. agents and their



Rob Sussman

Italian surrogates took control of key government agencies, at times reducing Italian democracy to little more than a proving ground for the CIA's and the White House's aggressive tactics. The undercover campaign, known as "Gladio," for a double-edged Roman sword, was officially acknowledged for the first time in 1990, when it was finally closed down.

### The Dimensions of Gladio

The Italian people had received many signs over the years that the centrist parties — the Christian Democrats and the Socialists — were promoted and to some degree controlled by Washington. But it was only when the Italian government officially admitted it in 1990 that the ruling coalition began to crumble, ready to be picked apart two years later by corruption scandals. The startling story of Gladio, which continues to make headlines in Europe, has barely been mentioned in the U.S., where many of its darkest chapters remain secret.

The program in Italy was aimed at the threat that communists might mount an insurrection or gain a share of political power through the ballot box. An insurrection was unlikely, however, since nearly all posts in the bureaucracy were filled after the war by solidly anticommunist veterans of Mussolini's forces, with Allied approval.

Arthur E. Rowse is a free-lance writer formerly on the staff of the *Washington Post* and *U.S. News & World Report*.

1. The main players in the Italian party system since World War II have been the Christian Democrats and the Socialists in the center, the Italian Communist Party on the left, and a handful of small parties on the right. In the 1994 elections, Berlusconi's new *Forza Italia* joined with the neo-fascist National Alliance and the separatist Northern League to overcome the coalition led by the Democratic Party of the Left, the renamed communist party. Coming in a distant third were the remnants of the centrist coalition. The 1994 elections marked the first time Italians could vote directly for a coalition.

2. See, for example, Alan Cowell, "Italy's Neofascists Get 5 Cabinet Seats in New Government," *New York Times*, May 11, 1994, pp. A1, A5.

During the war, most Americans considered themselves heroes who freed Western Europe from its brutal Nazi and fascist rulers. It wasn't long after the American landings on Italian soil, however, that the white hats got sullied. While some OSS agents worked with antifascists to help lay the basis for Italian democracy, many of those higher up the ladder conspired with backers of Mussolini or the former king to impede it.<sup>3</sup>

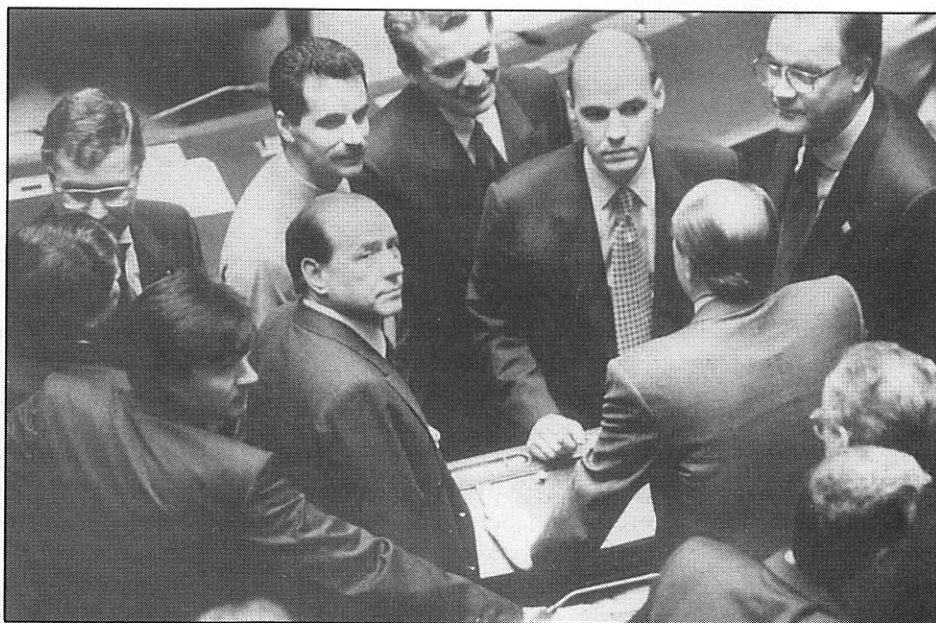
Although many European intelligence agencies have admitted participating, the CIA has denied any connection with Gladio. But enough information has emerged to show that the CIA sponsored and financed a large portion of the terrorism and disruption that plagued Italy for nearly half a century. Among other things, the U.S. government:

- Forged secret alliances with the Mafia and right-wing elements of the Vatican to prevent the left from playing any role in government;
- Recruited Mussolini's ex-police into paramilitary bands secretly financed and trained by the CIA, ostensibly to fight Soviets, but really to conduct terror attacks blamed on the left;
- Employed the gamut of psychological warfare tactics, including paying millions in slush funds to political parties, journalists, and other influential contacts to tilt parliamentary elections against the left;
- Created a secret service and a parallel government structure linked to the CIA whose "assets" attempted several times to overthrow the elected government; and
- Targeted Prime Minister Aldo Moro, who was later kidnapped and murdered under mysterious circumstances after offering to bring communists into the Cabinet.

### The Secret NATO Cover

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) provided international cover for Washington's postwar operations in Italy. A secret clause in the initial NATO agreement in 1949 required that before a nation could join, it must have already established a national security authority to fight communism through clandestine citizen cadres. This "Stay Behind" clause grew out of a secret committee set up at U.S. insistence in the Atlantic Pact, the forerunner of NATO. Each NATO member was also required to send delegates to semiannual meetings on the subject.<sup>4</sup>

U.S. authority for such moves flowed in a steady stream of presidential directives transmitted through the National



Silvio Berlusconi ("Go, Italy" party), at the legislature surrounded by members of the separatist Northern League and the neo-fascist National Alliance.

Agenzia Giornalistica Italia

Security Council (NSC). In December 1950, the council gave the armed forces carte blanche to use "appropriate" military force even if the communists merely "gain participation" in government by legal means or "threaten to achieve control...or the government ceases to evidence a determination to oppose communist internal or external threats."<sup>5</sup>

The CIA helped the Italian police set up secret squadrons staffed in many cases with veterans of Mussolini's secret police.<sup>6</sup> The squadrons were trained for intensive espionage and counter-espionage, against communists and other perceived enemies of the status quo. The plan to use "exceptional means" was patterned after the highly militarized French intelligence service, the Sureté Nationale, which was reportedly so tough on communists that many fled to other countries.<sup>7</sup>

The newly organized intelligence agency, SIFAR, began operations in September 1949, under the supervision of an undercover American, Carmel Offie, nicknamed "godfather" by the Italians.<sup>8</sup> Interior Minister Mario Scelba headed the operation. At the same time, Scelba was directing a brutal repression, murdering hundreds of workers and peasants who sought improved conditions after the war.<sup>9</sup>

### Operation Demagnetize

With the Italian secret service under control, the Americans then expanded it under the name Operation Demagnetize and tied it to an existing network of cadre in northern Italy. In 1951, the Italian secret service formally agreed to set up a clandestine organization within the military to coordinate with the northern

5. National Security Council Directive 67/2, December 29, 1950.

6. R. Faenza and M. Fini, *Gli Americani in Italia* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976), p. 320.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Willems, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

9. Roberto Giammanco, letter to Edward Herman, June 24, 1991.

3. Peter Tompkins, *Mondo's Men*, unpublished manuscript.

4. Jan Willems, *Gladio* (Brussels: EPO Dossier, 1991), pp. 148-52; interview with Lord Carrington, *Newsweek*, April 21, 1986.



# Gladio's Roots

**T**he policies that would evolve into Gladio began during World War II, when U.S. anticommunist phobias combined with geopolitical fears of a victorious USSR to create a holy war against the left. An "ends justify the means" atmosphere within the U.S. government and particularly within the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), fostered the creation of "Stay Behind" programs throughout Western Europe, ostensibly as the first line of defense in case the Soviets invaded.

But the main worry was internal. The Americans' great fear for Italy was that communist partisans fighting in the north would join with organized labor to bring the left to power. The OSS and its successors were apparently prepared to use any measures to forestall that event, including political assassination, terrorism, and alliances with organized crime. According to one OSS memo to Washington, the U.S. seemed to support a monarchist plan to use "fascist killers" to commit acts of terror and blame the left.<sup>1</sup> U.S. involvement in Italian politics began in 1942, when the OSS successfully pressured the Justice Department to release imprisoned mobster Charles "Lucky" Luciano. In return for early freedom, Luciano agreed

to make contacts with Mafia pals to ease the way for the U.S. invasion of Sicily in 1943.<sup>2</sup>

The Luciano deal forged a long-standing alliance between the U.S. and the international Cosa Nostra. It also set a pattern of cooperation between U.S. intelligence agencies and international criminal organizations involved in drugs and arms traffic. The deal's godfather was Earl Brennan, OSS chief for Italy. Before the war, he had served in the U.S. Embassy, using his diplomatic cover to establish contacts with Mussolini's secret police and leading fascists.<sup>3</sup>

The Catholic Church also cooperated. U.S. ties to the Vatican were already substantial; one of the strongest links was a secret fraternity, the Rome-based Sovereign Military Order of Malta, which dates back to the First Crusade. OSS head William "Wild Bill" Donovan was a member. So were other top U.S. officials, including Myron Taylor, U.S. envoy to the Vatican from 1939 to 1950,

and William Casey, an OSS operative who rose to CIA chief under Reagan. OSS Italy chief Brennan had contacts as early as 1942 with Vatican Under-Secretary of State Gian Battista Montini, who became Pope Paul VI in 1963.<sup>4</sup>

**A**mong the notable OSS operatives was James Jesus Angleton, the legendary, paranoid, future CIA counter-intelligence chief. Angleton built on family and business connections in Italy to lay the basis of Gladio by forming and financing a clandestine network of right-wing Italians who shared his fierce gung-ho style.<sup>5</sup> The paramilitary groups were filled with devout anticommunists ready to wage war on the left. He also helped notorious Nazi/fascist mass-murderers such as Junio Valerio "Black Prince" Borghese elude justice at war's end.<sup>6</sup>

U.S. officials were worried that the communists and socialists would join forces after the fighting. The communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in 1948 added to their fears. As a result, the U.S. cooked up a variety of plans to manipulate Italian politics. Angleton, who by late 1948 had been promoted to special assistant to CIA director Admiral Roscoe Hillenkoetter, used

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*"If the Communist Party wins the [1948] election," the NSC advised, "such aggression should immediately be countered by steps to extend the strategic disposition of U.S. armed forces in Italy."*

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the Vatican's 20,000 Civic Committees to conduct psychological warfare against communist influences, particularly in the unions.<sup>7</sup>

The newly formed National Security Council (NSC) also joined the fray: "If the Communist Party wins the [1948] election," the NSC advised, "such aggression should immediately be countered by steps to extend the strategic disposition of U.S. armed forces in Italy."<sup>8</sup> The Communists did not win that pivotal election (nor any subsequent ones). But that didn't stop the U.S. from trying to destroy the left. The total cost to American taxpayers for such activities — and various aid programs — was \$4 billion from the end of the war to 1953.<sup>9</sup> And that was just the beginning of the U.S. assault on Italian sovereignty. •

1. OSS Memorandum 99642, October 24, 1944.

2. U.S. Senate Special Committee, *Hearings on Organized Crime*, Part 7, 1951, p. 1181.

3. R. Faenza and M. Fini, *Gli Americani in Italia* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976), p. 8.

4. Frederic Laurent, *L'Orchestre Noir* (Paris: Editions Stock, 1978), p. 29; cited in Francoise Hervet, "Knights of Darkness: The Sovereign Military Order of Malta," *CovertAction*, No. 25, p. 31.

5. David Wise, *Molehunt* (New York: Random House, 1992), p. 40.

6. Peter Tompkins, *Mondo's Men*, unpublished manuscript, Epilogue, p. 10.

7. State Department Memorandum 865.5043, September 16, 1948; cited in Faenza and Fini, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

8. National Security Council Order 1/1, November 14, 1947.

9. U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum, March 14, 1952; cited in Willems, *op. cit.*, p. 80, note 21.

cadres. In 1952, SIFAR received secret orders from Washington to adopt "a series of political, paramilitary and psychological operations destined to diminish the power" of the Italian Communist Party, its material resources, and its influence on government. "This priority objective must be attained by all means."<sup>10</sup>

Operation Demagnetize marked the institutional hardening of Gladio. A State Department historian characterized it as the "strategy of stabilization,"<sup>11</sup> although it could be more accurately described as one of destabilization. From the start, the offensive was secretly directed and funded by the U.S. government. In 1956, the arrangement was formalized in a written agreement, using the name "Gladio" for the first time.

According to 1956 documents uncovered in Italy in 1990, Gladio was divided into independent cells coordinated from a CIA camp in Sardinia. These "special forces" included 40 main groups. Ten specialized in sabotage, six each in espionage, propaganda, evasion and escape tactics, and 12 in guerrilla activities. Another division handled the training of agents and commandos. These "special forces" had access to underground arms caches, which included hand guns, grenades, high-tech explosives, daggers, 60-millimeter mortars, 57-millimeter machine guns and precision rifles.<sup>12</sup>

In 1956, Gen. Giovanni De Lorenzo was named to head SIFAR on the recommendation of U.S. Ambassador Claire Boothe Luce, the avidly anticommunist wife of the publisher of *Time* magazine.<sup>13</sup> A key player in Gladio was now in place. In 1962, the CIA helped place De Lorenzo at the head of the national police (*carabinieri*), while he retained effective control of the secret service.

The general brought with him 17 lieutenants to begin purging insufficiently right-wing officers. It was the first step to a right-wing coup attempt, with U.S. military attaché Vernon Walters in the vanguard. In a memo to De Lorenzo the same year, Walters suggested types of intervention aimed at

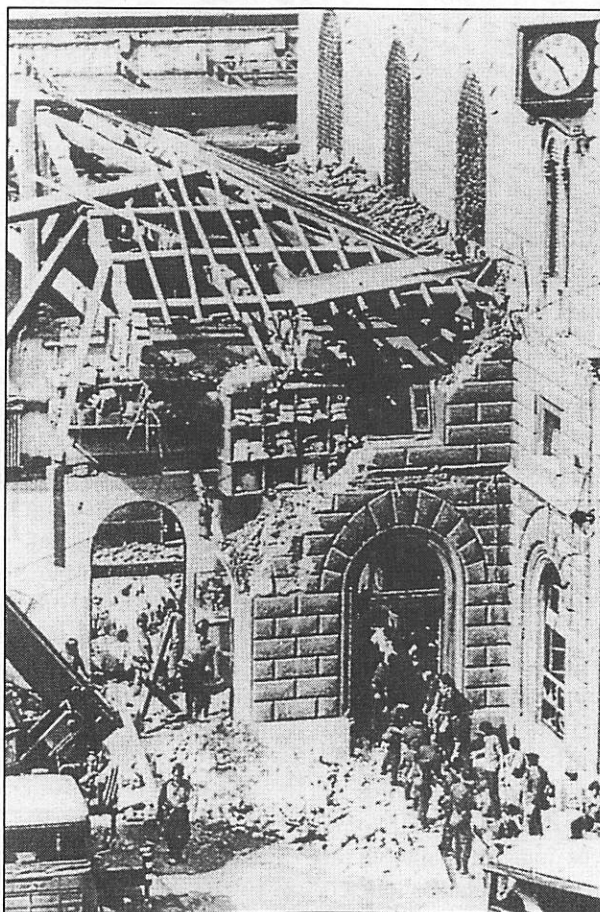
provoking a national crisis, including blocking a center-left coalition, creating schisms among the socialists, and funding forces favorable to the status quo.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, according to CIA files found in Rome in 1984, CIA station chief William Harvey began to recruit "action teams" based on a list of 2,000 men "capable of throwing bombs, conducting attacks, and accompanying these actions with indispensable propaganda."<sup>15</sup> These teams had a chance to practice their skills in 1963 as part of an anti-union offensive. U.S.-trained gladiators dressed as police and civilians attacked

construction workers peacefully demonstrating in Rome, leaving some 200 wounded and a large section of the city in shambles. The link to Gladio was made in later testimony by a former general in the secret service.<sup>16</sup>

SIFAR Lt. Col. Renzo Rocca was also training a civil militia composed of ex-soldiers, parachutists and members of Junio Valerio "Black Prince" Borghese's paramilitary organization, *Decima MAS* (Tenth Torpedo Boat Squadron), for the pending coup.<sup>17</sup> President Antonio Segni reportedly knew of the plan, which was to conclude with the assassination of Prime Minister Aldo Moro, under fire for not being tough enough with the communists.<sup>18</sup>

The long-planned takeover, known later as Plan Solo, fizzled in March 1964, when the key *carabinieri* involved remained in their barracks. As a subsequent inquiry moved to question Rocca about the coup attempt, he apparently killed himself, possibly to fulfill Gladio's oath of silence. After officials determined that state secrets were involved, three hamstrung inquiries failed to determine the guilty parties.<sup>19</sup>



**Bombing of Bologna train station, 1980, killed 85 people. Investigations led to Gladio and the CIA.**

### The Strategy of Tension

Despite the failure of Plan Solo, the CIA and the Italian right had largely succeeded in creating the clandestine structures

10. U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum, March 14, 1952; cited in Willems, *op. cit.*, p. 80, note 21.

11. See James Edward Miller, *The United States and Italy, 1940-1950: The Politics and Diplomacy of Stabilization* (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1986).

12. Marco Scalia, "Operazione Gladio," *Avvenimenti*, November 7, 1990, p. 11.

13. Willems, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

15. Roberto Faenza, *Il Malaffare* (Milan: Mondadori, 1978), p. 70; cited in Willems, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

16. Scalia, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

17. M. Sassano, *SID e Partito Americano* (Venice and Padua: Marsilio, 1975), pp. 75-76; cited in Willems, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

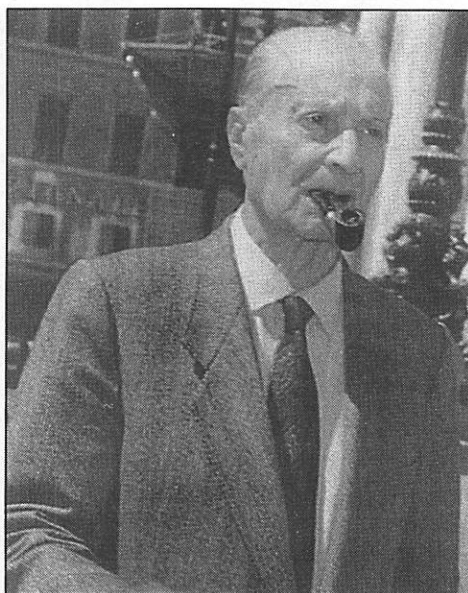
18. Stuart Christie, *Stefano Delle Chiaie: Portrait of a 'Black' Terrorist* (London: Refract Publishers, 1984), p. 24.

19. Willems, *op. cit.*, p. 85.





Panorama



Granta

Gen. Giovanni De Lorenzo (l.), CIA co-plotter and founder of Italian intelligence agency. Gen. Vito Miceli (r.) organized clandestine security structures for Gladio.

envisioned in Operation Demagnetize. Now the plotters turned their attention to a renewed offensive against the left.

To win intellectual support, the secret services set up a conference in Rome at the luxurious Parco dei Principi hotel in May 1965, for a "study" of "revolutionary war." The choice of words was inadvertently revealing, since the conveners and invited participants were planning a real revolution, not just warning of an imaginary communist takeover. The meeting was essentially a reunion of fascists, right-wing journalists, and military personnel. "The strategy of tension" that emerged was designed to disrupt normality with terror attacks in order to create chaos and provoke a frightened public into accepting still more authoritarian government.<sup>20</sup>

Several "graduates" of this exercise had long records of anticommunist actions and would later be implicated in some of Italy's worst massacres. One was journalist and secret agent Guido Giannettini. Four years earlier, he had conducted a seminar at the U.S. Naval Academy on "The Techniques and Prospects of a Coup d'Etat in Europe." Another was notorious fascist Stefano Delle Chiaie, who had reportedly been recruited as a secret agent in 1960. He had organized his own armed band known as *Avanguardia Nazionale* (AN), whose members had begun training in terror tactics in preparation for Plan Solo.<sup>21</sup>

General De Lorenzo, whose SIFAR had now become SID, soon enlisted these and other confidants in a new Gladio project. They planned to create a secret parallel force alongside sensitive government offices to neutralize subversive elements not yet "purified." Known as the Parallel SID, its tentacles reached into nearly every key institution of the Italian state. Gen. Vito Miceli, who later headed SID, said he

set up the separate structure "at the request of the Americans and NATO."<sup>22</sup>

### Fraternal Bonds

Two ancient, mysterious, international fraternities kept the loosely-linked Gladio programs from flying apart. The Knights of Malta played a formative role after the war (see box), but the order of Freemasonry and its most notorious lodge in Italy, known as Propaganda Due (pronounced "doo-ay"), or P-2, was far more influential. In the late 1960s, its "Most Venerable Master" was Licio Gelli, a Knight of Malta who fought for Franco with Mussolini's Black Shirts. At the end of World War II, Gelli faced execution by Italian partisans for his Nazi collaboration, but escaped by joining the U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps.<sup>23</sup> In the

1950s, he was recruited by SIFAR.

After some years of self-imposed exile in Argentine fascist circles,<sup>24</sup> he saw his calling in Italy as a Mason. Quickly rising to its top post, he began fraternizing in 1969 with Gen. Alexander Haig, then assistant to Henry Kissinger, President Nixon's national security chief. Gelli became the main intermediary between the CIA and SID's De Lorenzo, also a Mason and Knight. Gelli's first order from the White House was reportedly to recruit 400 more top Italian and NATO officials.<sup>25</sup>

To help ferret out dissidents, Gelli and De Lorenzo began compiling personal dossiers on thousands of people, including legislators and clerics.<sup>26</sup> Within a few years, scandal

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*"With 10,000 armed civilians running around, as usual, I'm president of shit."*

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— Pres. Giovanni Leone

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erupted when an inquiry found 157,000 such files in SID, all available to the Ministers of Defense and Interior.<sup>27</sup> Parliament ordered 34,000 files burned, but by then the CIA had obtained duplicates for its archives.<sup>28</sup>

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

23. Willems, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

24. For connections between Gelli, P-2, and Argentine rightists, see Martin Andersen, *Dossier Secreto: Argentina's Desaparecidos and the Myth of the 'Dirty War'* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993), chapters 10 and 20.

25. SISMI Memo 446/R; quoted in Roberto Chiodi, "Gelli and Kissinger," *L'Espresso* (Rome), November 25, 1990, p. 133.

26. Willems, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

27. De Lorenzo, before Commission of Inquiry, 1964, p. 69; cited in Willems, *Ibid.*, p. 83.

28. Faenza, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

20. Mario Scialoja, "Un Convegno Esplosivo," *L'Espresso*, November 25, 1990, p. 127.

21. Christie, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, 33.

## Provocateurs on the Right

In 1968, the Americans started formal commando training for the gladiators at the clandestine Sardinian "NATO" base. Within a few years, 4,000 graduates had been placed in strategic posts. At least 139 arms caches, including some at *carabinieri* barracks, were at their disposal.<sup>29</sup> To induce young men to join such a risky venture, the CIA paid high salaries and promised that if they were killed, their children would be educated at U.S. expense.<sup>30</sup>

Tensions began to reach critical mass that same year. While dissidents took to the streets all over the world, in Italy, takeovers of universities and strikes for higher wages and pensions were overshadowed by a series of bloody political crimes. The number of terrorist acts reached 147 in 1968, rising to 398 the next year, and to an incredible peak of 2,498 in 1978 before tapering off, largely because of a new law encouraging informers ("*pentiti*").<sup>31</sup> Until 1974, the indiscriminate bombers of the right constituted the main force behind political violence.

The first major explosion occurred in 1969 in Milan's Piazza Fontana; it killed 18 people and injured 90. In this and numerous other massacres, anarchists proved handy scapegoats for fascist provocateurs seeking to blame the left. Responding to a phone tip after the Milan massacre, police arrested 150 alleged anarchists and even put some on trial. But two years later, new evidence led to the indictment of several neofascists and SID officers. Three innocent anarchists were convicted, but later absolved, while those responsible for the attack emerged unpunished by Italian justice.<sup>32</sup>

Conclusive Gladio links to political violence were found after a plane exploded in flight near Venice in November 1973. Venetian judge Carlo Mastelloni determined that the Argo-16 aircraft was used to shuttle trainees and munitions between the U.S. base in Sardinia and Gladio sites in northeast Italy.<sup>33</sup>

The apogee of right-wing terror came in 1974 with two massacres. One, a bombing at an antifascist rally in Brescia, killed eight and injured 102. The other was an explosion on the Italicus train near Bologna, killing 12 and wounding 105. At this point, President Giovanni Leone, with little exaggeration, summed up the situation: "With 10,000 armed civilians running around, as usual, I'm president of shit."<sup>34</sup>



Farabola



M. Bruni

**"Black Prince" Borghese (l.) went from murdering anti-fascist partisans to plotting coups. Licio Gelli (r.) leader of P-2, was at the center of many plots.**

At Brescia, the initial call to police also blamed anarchists, but the malefactor later turned out to be a secret agent in the Parallel SID.<sup>35</sup> A similar connection was also alleged in the Italicus case. Two fascists who were eventually convicted were members of a clandestine police group called the Black Dragons, according to the left-wing paper, *Lotta Continua*.<sup>36</sup> Their sentences were also overturned.

Although in these and other cases, many leftists were arrested and tried, fascists or neofascists were often the culprits, in league with Gladio groups and the Italian secret services. Reflecting the degree to which these forces controlled the government through the Parallel SID, nearly all the rightists implicated in these atrocities were later freed.

By 1974, right-wing terror began to be answered by the armed left, which favored carefully targeted hit-and-run attacks over the right's indiscriminate bombings. For the next six years, leftist militants, especially the Red Brigades, responded with a vengeance, accounting for far more acts of political violence than the right.<sup>37</sup> For several years, Italy plunged into a virtual civil war.

## Plotting Coups d'Etat

Meanwhile, groups of right-wingers were busy planning more takeovers of the elected government, with the active encouragement of U.S. officials. A seminal document was the 1970 132-page order on "stability operations" in "host" countries, published as Supplement B of the U.S. Army's Field Manual 30-31. Taking its cue from earlier NSC and CIA papers, the manual explained that if a country is not sufficiently anticommunist, "serious attention must be given to possible modifications of the structure." If that country does not react with

29. Willems, *op. cit.*, p. 90, and Scalia, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

30. Scalia, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

31. U.S. Senate, "Terrorism and Security: The Italian Experience," *Report of Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism*, November 1984, p. 62.

32. Frederic Laurent, *L'Orchestre Noir* (Paris: Editions Stock, 1978), p. 212; cited in Francoise Hervet, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31; and Willems, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-04.

33. Willems, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

34. Franco Giustolizi, "Retrovie Parallele," *L'Espresso*, November 18, 1990, p. 15.

35. Scalia, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

36. Christie, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

37. Willems, *op. cit.*, p. 94.





Panorama

**Prime Minister Aldo Moro was killed by kidnappers after the government refused to negotiate. Here, his body is found in the trunk of a car.**

adequate "vigor," the document continues, "groups acting under U.S. Army intelligence control should be used to launch violent or nonviolent actions according to the nature of the case."<sup>38</sup>

With such incendiary suggestions and thousands of U.S.-trained guerrillas ready, the fascists again attempted to take over the government by force in 1970. This time, the instigator was the "Black Prince" Borghese. Fifty men under the command of Stefano Delle Chiaie seized the Interior Ministry in Rome after being let in at night by an aide to political police head Federico D'Amato. But the operation was aborted when Borghese received a mysterious phone call later attributed to General Vito Miceli, the military intelligence chief. The plotters were not arrested; instead, they left with 180 stolen machine guns.<sup>39</sup> News of the attack remained secret until an informer tipped the press three months later. By then, the culprits had escaped to Spain. Although the ringleaders were convicted in 1975, the verdict was overturned on appeal. All but one of the machine guns were returned earlier.<sup>40</sup>

It was in this atmosphere that the U.S. decided to make another all-out effort to block the communists from gaining strength in the 1972 elections. According to the Pike Report, the CIA disbursed \$10 million to 21 candidates, mostly

Christian Democrats.<sup>41</sup> That amount did not include \$800,000 that Ambassador Graham Martin, going around the CIA, obtained through Henry Kissinger at the White House for General Miceli.<sup>42</sup> Miceli would later face charges for the Borghese coup attempt but, fitting the pattern, he was cleared.

Police foiled another attempted coup that same year. They found hit lists and other documents exposing some 20 subversive groups forming the Parallel SID structure. Roberto Cavallaro, a fascist trade unionist, was implicated, as were highly placed generals, who said they got approval from NATO and U.S. officials. In later testimony, Cavallaro said the group was set up to restore order after any trouble arose. "When these troubles do not erupt [by themselves]," he said, "they are contrived by the far right." Gen. Miceli was arrested, but the courts eventually freed him, declaring that there had been no insurrection.<sup>43</sup>

Still another right-wing attempt to overthrow the government was set for 1974, reportedly with the imprimatur of both the CIA and NATO. Its leader was Edgardo Sogno, one of Italy's most decorated resistance fighters, who had formed a Gladio-style group after the war. Sogno, who had gained many influential American friends while working at the Italian embassy in Washington during the 1960s, was later arrested, but he, too, was eventually cleared.<sup>44</sup>

### Gladio Unravels

A triple murder at Peteano near Venice in May 1972 turned out to be pivotal in exposing Gladio. The crime occurred when three *carabinieri*, in response to an anonymous phone call, went to check out a suspicious car. When one of them opened the hood, all three were blown to bits by a boobytrap bomb.<sup>45</sup> An anonymous call two days later implicated the Red Brigades, the most active of the left's revolutionary groups. The police immediately rounded up 200 alleged communists, thieves and pimps for questioning, but no charges were brought.

Ten years later, a courageous Venetian magistrate, Felice Casson, reopened the long-dormant case only to learn that there had been no police investigation at the scene. Despite

38. When the U.S. Embassy in Rome heard that the Top Secret document was going to be published, it said such action would be "inopportune." After publication, the embassy claimed it was a forgery. The full text appeared as "The Mysterious Supplement B: Sticking It to the 'Host Country,'" *CovertAction*, No. 3 (January 1979), pp. 11, 14-18. But Licio Gelli said the CIA gave him a copy. *BBC Special*, "Gladio, Part III, The Foot Soldiers," June 10, 1992.

39. John Dinges and Saul Landau, *Assassination on Embassy Row* (London: Writers and Readers, 1980), pp. 163, 177.

40. Interview with University of California instructor/doctoral candidate, Jeff Bale.

41. Aaron Latham, "The CIA Report the President Doesn't Want You to Read: The Select Committee's Record," *Village Voice*, February 20, 1976, p. 23. The *Voice* two-part series reprinted in its entirety the report of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, better known as the "Pike Report."

42. *Ibid.*

43. Willems, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

44. Phillip Willan, *Puppetmasters* (London: Constable & Co., 1991), pp. 107-10.

45. Scalia, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

receiving a false analysis from a secret service bomb expert and confronting numerous obstructions and delays, the judge traced the explosives to a militant outfit called New Order and to one of its active members, Vincenzo Vinciguerra. He promptly confessed and was sentenced to life, the only right-wing bomber ever locked up.<sup>46</sup>

Vinciguerra refused to implicate others, but described the coverup:

The *carabinieri*, the Ministry of Interior, the Customs and Excise police, the civilian and military secret services all knew the truth behind the attack, that I was responsible and all this within 20 days. So they decided, for totally political reasons, to cover it up.<sup>47</sup>

As for his motive, the fascist true believer Vinciguerra said his misdeed was "an act of revolt against the manipulation" of neofascism since 1945 by the whole Gladio-based parallel structure.<sup>48</sup>

Casson eventually found enough incriminating evidence to implicate the highest officials of the land. In what was the first such request to an Italian president, Casson demanded explanations from President Francesco Cossiga. But Casson didn't stop there; he also demanded that other officials come clean. In October 1990, under pressure from Casson, Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti ended 30 years of denials and described Gladio in detail. He added that all prime ministers had been aware of Gladio, though some later denied it.<sup>49</sup>

Suddenly, Italians saw clues to many mysteries, including the unexplained death of Pope John Paul I in 1978. Author David Yallop lists Gelli as a suspect in that case, saying that he, "for all practical purposes, ran Italy at the time."<sup>50</sup>

### Memento Moro

Perhaps the most shocking political crime of the 1970s was the kidnapping and murder of Prime Minister Aldo Moro and five of his aides in 1978. The abduction occurred as Moro was on his way to submit a plan to strengthen Italian political stability by bringing communists into the government.

Earlier versions of the plan had sent U.S. officials into a tizzy. Four years before his death, on a visit to the U.S. as foreign minister, Moro was reportedly read the riot act by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and later by an unnamed

intelligence official. In testimony during the inquiry into his murder, Moro's widow summed up their ominous words: "You must abandon your policy of bringing all the political forces in your country into direct collaboration...or you will pay dearly for it."<sup>51</sup>

Moro was so shaken by the threats, according to an aide, that he became ill the next day and cut short his U.S. visit, saying he was through with politics.<sup>52</sup> But U.S. pressure continued; Senator Henry Jackson (D-Wash.) issued a similar warning two years later in an interview in Italy.<sup>53</sup> Shortly before his kidnapping, Moro wrote an article replying to his U.S. critics, but decided not to publish it.<sup>54</sup>

While being held captive for 55 days, Moro pleaded repeatedly with his fellow Christian Democrats to accept a ransom offer to exchange imprisoned Red Brigade members for his freedom. But they refused, to the delight of Allied officials who wanted the Italians to play hardball. In a letter found later, Moro predicted: "My death will fall like a curse on all Christian Democrats, and it will initiate a disastrous and unstoppable collapse of all the party apparatus."<sup>55</sup>

During Moro's captivity, police unbelievably claimed to

have questioned millions of people and searched thousands of dwellings. But the initial judge investigating the case, Luciano Infelisi, said he had no police at his disposal. "I ran the investigation with a single typist, without even a telephone in the room." He added that he received no useful information from the se-

cret services during the time.<sup>56</sup> Other investigating magistrates suggested in 1985 that one reason for the inaction was that all the key officers involved were members of P-2 and were therefore acting at the behest of Gelli and the CIA.<sup>57</sup>

Although the government eventually arrested and convicted several Red Brigade members, many in the press and parliament continue to ask whether SID arranged the kidnapping after receiving orders from higher up. Suspicions naturally turned toward the U.S., particularly Henry Kissinger, though he denied any role in the crime. In Gladio and the

(continued on p. 62)

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*"My death will fall like a curse on all Christian Democrats, and it will initiate a disastrous and unstoppable collapse of all the party apparatus." — Aldo Moro*

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46. Marcella Andreoli, "Che Bomba di Esperto!" *Panorama* (Milan), November 18, 1990, p. 44.

47. *BBC Special*, "Gladio, Part II: The Puppeteers," June 10, 1992.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Francois Vitroni, "Gladio Revelations Put Sword at Heart of Italian Politics," *Guardian Weekly* (Manchester), December 23, 1990, p. 14.

50. David A. Yallop, *In God's Name* (New York: Bantam, 1984), p. 314.

51. Giuseppe Zupo and Vincenzo Marini, *Operazione Moro* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1984), p. 280; cited in Willan, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

52. Willan, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 221.

54. *Ibid.* Moro's article was published in *L'Unita* (Rome), May 29, 1978, after his death.

55. Dario Fo and Franca Rame, "What Passion! What Generosity! What Corruption!" *New York Times*, December 5, 1993, p. A4.

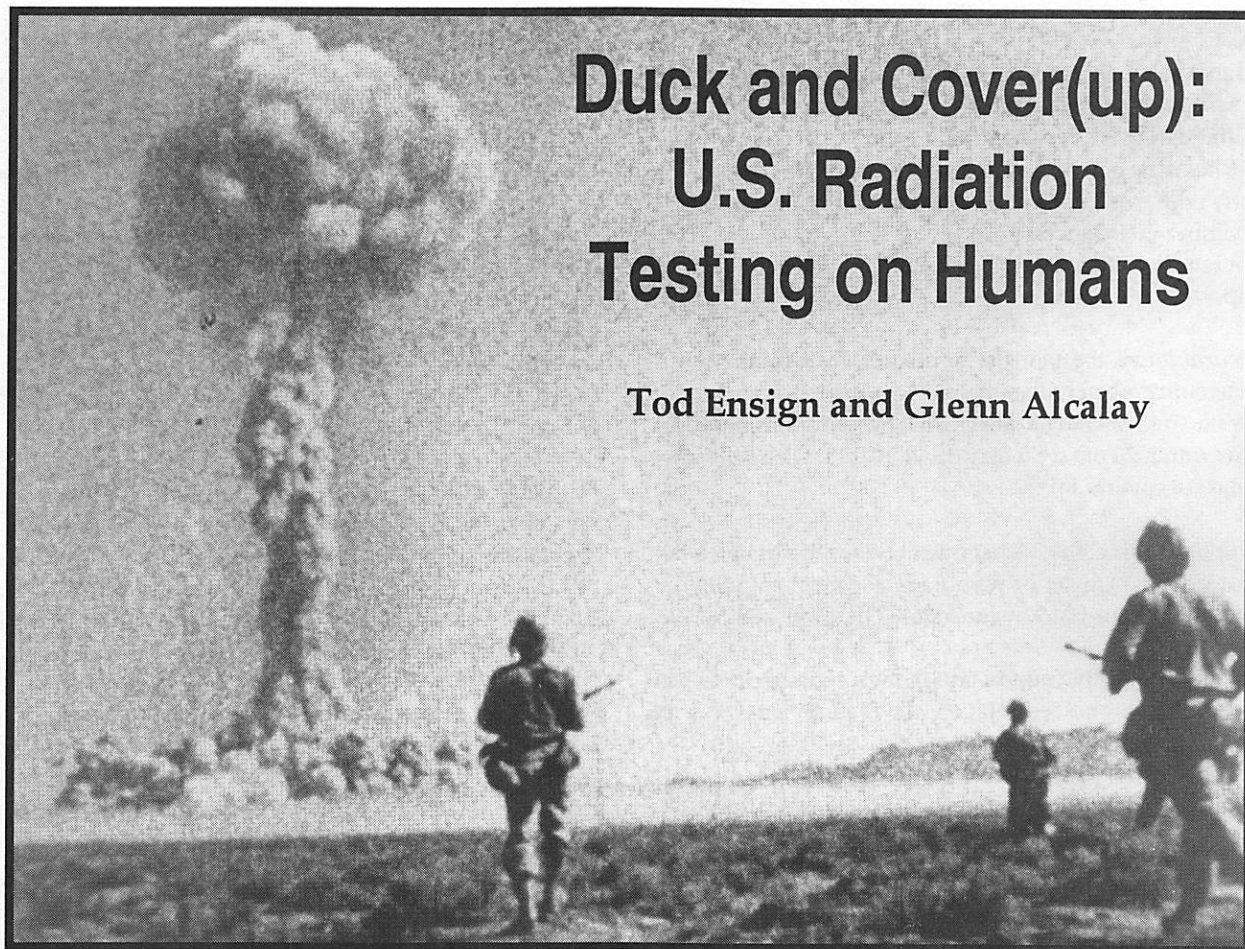
56. *Report of the Moro Commission*, 1983, pp. 68-69; cited in Willan, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

57. Chiodi, *op. cit.*, p. 134. The depth of police involvement in terrorism became especially clear in testimony at a 1983 inquiry. Army Col. Amos Spiazzi recalled that in 1970 he had accidentally encountered two *Carabinieri* officers preparing a bomb near the northern Italian town of Bolzano. He arrested them and notified his station. While bringing them in, however, he was intercepted by national and local police, who took his prisoners away. He was later transferred to a distant station. Scalia, *op. cit.*, p. 12.



# Duck and Cover(up): U.S. Radiation Testing on Humans

Tod Ensign and Glenn Alcalay



"Test Smoky," from documentary film, *Atomic Cafe*, produced and directed by Kevin Rafferty, Jayne Loader, and Pierce Rafferty

If you have any lingering thoughts that the government's failure to disclose radiation experimentation on humans was driven by misguided national security concerns, throw them in the nearest nuclear waste dump. At least some officials knew what they were doing was unconscionable and were ducking the consequences and covering their tails. A recently leaked Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) document lays out in the most bare-knuckled manner the policy of coverup. "It is desired that no document be released which refers to experiments with humans and might have adverse effect on public opinion or result in legal suits. Documents covering such work field should be classified 'secret,'" wrote Colonel O.G. Haywood of the AEC.<sup>1</sup> This letter confirms a policy of complete secrecy where human radiation experiments were concerned.

The Haywood letter may help explain a recently discovered 1953 Pentagon document, declassified in 1975. The two-page order from the secretary of defense ostensibly brought U.S. guidelines for human experimentation in line with the Nuremberg Code, making adherence to a universal standard official U.S. policy. Ironically, however, the Penta-

gon document was classified and thus was probably not seen by many military researchers until its declassification in 1975.<sup>2</sup>

As these and a steady stream of similar reports confirm, for decades, the U.S. government had not only used human guinea pigs in radiation experiments, but had also followed a policy of deliberate deception and cover up of its misuse of both civilians and military personnel in nuclear weapons development and radiation research. While the Department of Energy (DoE) has made some belated moves toward greater openness, there are clear indications that other federal agencies and the White House have not yet deviated from the time-honored tradition of deceit and self-serving secrecy.

## Cracks in the Wall of Silence

The Clinton administration's first halting step toward taking responsibility for past government misdeeds occurred on Pearl Harbor Day 1993, when DoE Secretary Hazel O'Leary confirmed that the AEC, her agency's predecessor, had sponsored experiments in which hundreds of Americans were exposed to radioactive material, often without their consent.

That O'Leary had decided to break with her agency's long tradition of secrecy and deception was something of a surprise. After all, she came to the job after a career in the

Tod Ensign is director of the N.Y.-based Citizen Soldier, a GI/veterans' rights advocacy organization. His latest book is *Military Life: The Insider's Guide*. Glenn Alcalay teaches anthropology at City College, City University of New York, and is a coordinator of the N.Y.-based World Uranium Hearing. Photo: Soldiers charge into Ground Zero after an A-bomb blast in Nevada, August 1957. 1. Letter from Haywood, AEC, to Dr. Fidler, AEC, Oak Ridge, Tenn., April 17, 1947.

2. Gary Lee and William Claiborne, "Defense Kept Radiation Test Policy Secret," *Washington Post*, May 19, 1994, p. A9.

nuclear power industry. But, confronted by a media firestorm over the government's Cold War nuclear experiments, O'Leary was left with few options.

Her decision to confirm some government abuses and reveal others was precipitated by a series of reports by journalist Eileen Welsome in the *Albuquerque Tribune* last November and the nearly simultaneous release of a Government Accounting Office (GAO) report on radiation releases.<sup>3</sup> Following a six-year investigation, Welsome uncovered details of five experiments in which plutonium was injected into 18 people without their informed consent.

The GAO report, meanwhile, is an important finding that government scientists *deliberately* released radioactive material into populated areas so that they could study fallout patterns and the rate at which radioactivity decayed. It profiles 13 different releases of radiation from 1948-52. All were part of the U.S. nuclear weapons development program. The report concludes that "other planned radioactive releases not documented here may have occurred at ... U.S. nuclear sites during these years."<sup>4</sup> The disclaimer suggests that a good deal of information about radiation experiments remains locked away in government files.

Top DoE aide Dan Reicher pulled O'Leary out of a meeting last November just before the story broke to warn her that "People were injected with plutonium back in the 1940s, and there's a newspaper in New Mexico that's about to lay out the whole thing."<sup>5</sup>

O'Leary provided information about experiments at major universities, including MIT, the University of Chicago, California, and Vanderbilt. Experimenters exposed about 2,000 Americans to varying degrees of radiation. These numbers may grow as more information about experiments is released.

### Incidental Fallout

When O'Leary confirmed the human experiments, she also revealed two other important activities. First, she admitted her agency had secretly conducted 204 underground nuclear tests in Nevada from 1963-1990. These clandestine blasts were *in addition* to the 800-plus nuclear tests publicly announced during that period. DoE's secrecy may have deceived only Congress and the U.S. public. In 1990, the Soviet Union's minister for atomic energy produced an estimate of U.S. detonations that was very close to the actual number—including the secret ones.

O'Leary's other significant disclosure concerned DoE's massive stock of weapons-grade plutonium: 33.5 metric tons

of stockpiled plutonium and another 55.5 metric tons deployed in nuclear warheads and for similar uses.<sup>6</sup> This admission calls into question DoE's past claims that "national security" required the continued operation of unsafe plutonium processing plants to produce unnecessary stockpiles of plutonium.

O'Leary's disclosures about the human experiments have produced a torrent of publicity. Much less attention has been paid to her admissions about secret nuclear tests and plutonium stocks, which have much greater long-term implications for nuclear weapons policy.

### Down the Memory Hole

O'Leary's promises of full disclosure by DoE aside,<sup>7</sup> one well-placed source within the agency suggested that the Pentagon, NASA and the CIA were "just going through the motions."<sup>8</sup> For

example, the CIA announced in January 1994 that after searching its files it could locate only one reference to human experimentation with radiation. Former CIA official Scott Breckenridge charged that in 1973, Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, chief of the chemical division of the CIA's Technical Services Division, may have destroyed many

secret files, including those on human radiation experiments.<sup>9</sup>

The history of partial revelation and near complete inaction is long. In 1975, the Rockefeller Commission first revealed that the CIA may have conducted radiation experiments,<sup>10</sup> but the records—if not destroyed—have yet to be uncovered. William Colby, CIA director from 1973 to 1975, recently said, "I recall the various drug tests, which were scandalous, but nothing about radiation."<sup>11</sup> So far, the institutional memories of the implicated agencies appear to be as conveniently spotty as Colby's.

### Secret Experiments

While officials have dallied, dedicated reporters, angry victims, and a handful of government whistleblowers have exposed a pattern of secrecy and deception. A brief sampling of some of the macabre, secret human experiments uncovered by Welsome and others is chilling.

6. R. Jeffrey Smith, "U.S. Discloses 204 Secret Nuclear Tests," *Washington Post*, December 8, 1993, p. A1.

7. Even a fully cooperative DoE would be hard-pressed to implement full disclosure. The Atomic Energy Act of 1946 mandated that enormous quantities of material pertaining to nuclear weapons development be classified. The *New York Times* recently estimated that the DoE alone has accumulated 32 million pages of secret material on nuclear weapons. William Broad, "U.S. Begins Effort to Recast the Law on Atomic Secrets," *New York Times*, January 9, 1994, p. A1. Breckenridge is also the author of *The CIA and the Cold War* (New York: Praeger, 1993).

8. Interview with DoE official by Ensign, April 1994.

9. Tim Weiner, "CIA Seeks Documents From its Radiation Tests," *New York Times*, January 5, 1994, p. A11.

10. Timothy Clifford, "CIA Pushed For 'Hot' Files," *New York Daily News*, January 5, 1994, p. 5.

11. Weiner, *op. cit.*

3. Eileen Welsome, "The Plutonium Experiment," *Albuquerque Journal*, November 15-17, 1993; also General Accounting Office, "Nuclear Health and Safety: Examples of Post World War II Radiation Releases at U.S. Nuclear Sites," RCED 94-51FS, November 1993.

4. General Accounting Office, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

5. Keith Schneider, "Energy Chief in Spotlight As She Uncovers the Past," *New York Times*, January 6, 1994, p. A1.



# The Buchenwald Touch

**T**he still-emerging history of nuclear experimentation raises important issues of medical ethics and calls into question the scientific community's sensitivity to and awareness of these issues. It also raises the question of whether these experimenters, in furthering the Pentagon's military and security demands, violated international standards on human experimentation.

Even at this late date, it seems that some scientists involved are unable to see any problems with their behavior. Patricia Durbin, a scientist at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in California who participated in plutonium experiments, recently said:

They were always on the lookout for somebody who had some kind of terminal disease who was going to undergo an amputation. These things were not done to plague people or make them sick and miserable. They were not done to kill people. They were done to gain potentially valuable information. The fact that they were injected and provided this valuable data should almost be a sort of memorial rather than something to be ashamed of. It doesn't bother me to talk about the plutonium injectees because of the value of the information they provided.<sup>1</sup>

And Dr. Victor Bond, a medical physicist and doctor at Brookhaven National Laboratory, recently defended the Fernald experiments, in which retarded children were deliberately given radioactive substances in their breakfast cereal. "A question arose as to whether chemicals in breakfast cereals interfered with the uptake of iron or calcium in children. An answer was needed," declared Bond. In reference to the entire series of cold war nuclear experiments, Bond offered that "It's useful to know what dose of radiation sterilizes; it's useful to know what different doses of radiation will do to human beings."<sup>2</sup>

1. Eileen Welsome, "The Plutonium Experiment," *Albuquerque Tribune*, November 16, 1993.

2. Gina Kolata, "In Debate on Radiation Tests, Rush to Judgment is Resisted," *New York Times*, January 1, 1994, p. A1.

While Drs. Bond and Durbin rationalized such programs, other scientists have spoken out. Referring to the Cincinnati experiments in which 88 cancer patients were exposed to massive whole body doses of radiation, Dr. David Egilman, a former Cincinnati faculty member, said, "The study was designed to test the effects of radiation on soldiers. It was known that whole-body radiation wouldn't treat the patients' cancer. What happened was one of the worst things this government has done to its citizens."<sup>3</sup> And Dr. Joseph Hamilton, a neurologist at the University of California Hospital in San Francisco, referred to his own human radiation experiments in the 1940s as having "a little of the Buchenwald touch."<sup>4</sup>

**T**he "Buchenwald touch" is not limited to Cold War-related experiments. In what has come to be known as the "Tuskegee Study," 412 African American sharecroppers suffering from syphilis were rounded up in Tuskegee, Alabama, in the early 1930s. For forty years, the men were never told what had stricken them while doctors from the U.S. Public Health Service observed the ravages of the disease, from blindness and paralysis to dementia and early death. Even after penicillin proved to be an effective treatment for syphilis, they were left untreated.<sup>5</sup>

Nor are such experiments a thing of the past. Recent congressional hearings revealed studies on schizophrenia in the late 1980s where doctors intentionally worsened patients' symptoms, causing relapses and leading to the death by suicide of at least one of the patients. Dr. Michael Davidson, who led a study at the VA Hospital in the Bronx, defended the study, saying, "it would not be advisable to [warn] the patients about psychosis or relapse."<sup>6</sup> •

3. Keith Schneider, "Cold War Test on Humans to Undergo a Congressional Review," *New York Times*, April 11, 1994, p. D9.

4. Gregg Herken and James David, "Doctors of Death," Op-ed, *New York Times*, January 13, 1994, p. A24.

5. Isabel Wilkenson, "Medical Experiment Still Haunts Blacks," *New York Times*, June 3, 1991, p. A12.

6. Philip J. Hiltz, "Medical Experts Testify on Tests Done Without Consent," *New York Times*, May 24, 1994, p. A13.

• In 1945, Albert Stevens, a 58-year old California house painter suffering from a huge stomach ulcer, was injected with doses of plutonium 238 and 239 equivalent to 446 times the average lifetime exposure.<sup>12</sup> Doctors recommended an operation and told his children he had only six months to live. For the next year, scientists collected plutonium-laden urine and fecal samples from Stevens and used that data in a classified scientific report, "A Comparison of the Metabo-

lism of Plutonium in Man and the Rat." There is little doubt scientists knew of the danger: "The problem of chronic plutonium poisoning is a matter of serious concern for those who come in contact with this material," the report concluded.<sup>13</sup> AEC officials in 1947 refused to release the information "because it contains material, which in the opinion of the [AEC], might adversely affect the national interest."<sup>14</sup>

12. Eileen Welsome, "The Plutonium Experiment: Even in Death, Albert's Still Their Guinea Pig," *Albuquerque Tribune*, November 16, 1993.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Quoted in *ibid.*

• In 1947, doctors injected plutonium into the left leg of Elmer Allen, a 36-year-old African American railroad porter. Three days later, the leg was amputated for a supposed pre-existing bone cancer. Researchers analyzed tissue samples to determine the physiology of plutonium dispersion.<sup>15</sup> In 1973, scientists summoned Allen to the Argonne National Laboratory near Chicago, where he was subjected to a follow-up whole body radiation scan, and his urine was analyzed to ascertain lingering levels of plutonium from the 1947 injection.<sup>16</sup>

• **Beginning in 1949**, the Quaker Oats Company, the National Institutes of Health, and the AEC fed minute doses of radioactive materials to boys at the Fernald School for the mentally retarded in Waltham, Massachusetts, to determine if chemicals used in breakfast cereal prevented the body from absorbing iron and calcium. The unwitting subjects were told that they were joining a "science club." The consent form sent to the boys' parents made no mention of the radiation experiment.<sup>17</sup>

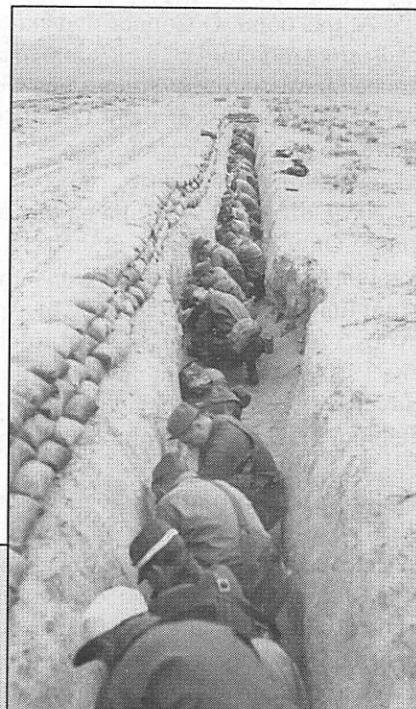
• **In 1963**, 131 prison inmates in Oregon and Washington state were paid about \$200 each to be exposed to 600 roentgens of radiation (100 times the allowable annual dose for nuclear workers). They signed consent forms agreeing "to submit to X-ray radiation of my scrotum and testes," but were not warned about the possibility of contracting testicular cancer. Doctors later performed vasectomies on the inmates "to avoid the possibility of contaminating the general population with irradiation-induced mutants."<sup>18</sup>

• **From 1960-71**, in experiments which may have caused the most deaths and spanned the most years, Dr. Eugene Saenger, a radiologist at the University of Cincinnati, exposed 88 cancer patients to whole body radiation.<sup>19</sup> Many of the guinea pigs were poor African-Americans at Cincinnati General Hospital with inoperable tumors. All but one of the 88 patients have since died.<sup>20</sup> There is evidence that scientists forged signatures on the consent forms for the Cincinnati experiments. Gloria Nelson testified before the House that her grandmother, Amelia Jackson, had been "strong and still

working before she was treated by Dr. Saenger." Following exposure to 100 rads of whole body radiation (about 7,500 chest X-rays), Amelia Jackson bled and vomited for days and became permanently disabled. Jackson testified that the signature on her grandmother's consent form was forged.<sup>21</sup>



Record Group (RG) 374-ANT-20-PL-19-03  
**Soldiers watch atom bomb, Operation Greenhouse, Enewetok, 1951.**



RG 374 ANT-30-007-PLK-17-06

**Troops in trenches rehearse for Operation Charlie blast at Nevada Test Site, 1952.**

### Watching the Bomb

While researchers were running tests on relatively small numbers of hapless civilians, the military was

conducting a series of potentially lethal experiments on a massive scale. From 1946-63, the military ordered more than 200,000 active-duty GIs to observe one or more nuclear bomb tests either in the Pacific or at the Nevada Test Site. The 195,000 GIs who served as part of the occupation force in Hiroshima and Nagasaki may also have suffered the effects of radiation. A vast body of information about nuclear bomb testing and its effects on humans has yet to see the light of day, but some individual accounts are harrowing.

One atomic veteran, Jim O'Connor, provided a detailed account of the "Turk" blast at the Nevada test site in March 1955. O'Connor reported seeing someone crawling from a bunker near ground-zero after the blast:

There was a guy with a mannequin look who had apparently crawled behind the bunker. Something like wires were attached to his arms and his face was bloody. I smelled an odor like burning flesh. The rotary camera I'd seen [earlier] was going 'zoom, zoom, zoom' and the guy kept trying to get up.<sup>22</sup>

21. *Ibid.*

22. O'Connor's story is recounted in Michael Uhl and Tod Ensign, *G.I. Guinea Pigs* (New York: Playboy Press, 1980), pp. 21-23.

15. Eileen Welsome, "The Plutonium Experiment: Elmer Allen Loses His Leg — And All Hope," *Albuquerque Tribune*, November 15, 1993.

16. *Ibid.*

17. "Two Recall 1949 Radiation Tests On Them," *New York Times*, January 14, 1994, p. A14.

18. "America's Nuclear Secrets," *Newsweek*, December 27, 1993, p. 15.

19. Keith Schneider, "Researchers Are Accused of Forgeries," *New York Times*, April 12, 1994, p. A20.

20. *Ibid.*



At this point, O'Connor fled and was picked up by AEC rad-safety monitors who took him to a hospital where he was treated for radiation overdose. The Defense Nuclear Agency refused to confirm or deny O'Connor's account, although there are reports which refer to a "volunteer officer program" at several of the test blasts.

Navy officer R.A. Hinnners was another nuclear guinea pig.<sup>23</sup> Only a mile from ground zero, he and seven other "volunteers" witnessed the detonation of a 55-kiloton bomb (four times the Hiroshima blast) on April 25, 1953. While the Army's report, "Exercise Desert Rock VII and VIII," covers the 1957 test series and notes that the observers suffered no adverse effects, the Pentagon has not released any material relating to the use of "volunteers" at any other tests.<sup>24</sup>

### Deliberate Atmospheric Radiation Releases

Nuclear researchers did not limit themselves to small groups of selected guinea pigs or large groups of soldiers under orders. The U.S. government also deliberately released radioactive materials into the atmosphere, endangering military personnel and untold numbers of civilians. Unsurprisingly, the people exposed during these tests were not informed.

In four of these tests at the AEC's facility at Los Alamos, New Mexico, bomb-testers set off conventional explosives to send aloft clouds of radioactive material, including strontium and uranium. When the AEC tracked the clouds across northern New Mexico, it detected some radioactivity 70 miles away. According to a Los Alamos press officer, there may have been as many as 250 other such tests during the same period.<sup>25</sup>

Nor was this intentional release the largest. During the December 1949 "Green Run" test at the Hanford (Washington) Nuclear Reservation, the AEC loosed thousands of curies of radioactive iodine-131—several times the amount released from the 1979 Three Mile Island disaster—into the atmosphere simply to test its recently installed radiological monitoring equipment. Passing over Spokane and reaching as far as the California-Oregon border, Green Run irradiated thousands of downwinders, as civilians exposed to the effects of airborne radiation tests are known, and contaminated an enormous swath of cattle grazing and dairy land.<sup>26</sup> A team of epidemiologists is now looking into an epidemic of late-occurring thyroid tumors and other radiogenic disorders among the downwind residents in eastern Washington state.

The plant's emissions control systems were turned off during the experiment, releasing into the atmosphere almost twice as much radioactive iodine-131 as originally planned. The GAO report notes that "the off-site population was not forewarned [nor] made aware of the [test] for several decades." It also notes that although "adverse weather patterns"

kept the radiation from spreading as far as expected, monitoring Air Force planes detected "hot" clouds over 100 miles northeast of the site.<sup>27</sup>

### Sacrificial Lambs

Even when the government took steps to create the appearance of openness, it was less than candid. "You are in a very real sense active participants in the Nation's atomic test program," proclaimed a 1955 AEC propaganda booklet widely disseminated to downwind neighbors of the Nevada Test Site. "Some of you have been inconvenienced by our test operations, and at times some of you have been exposed to potential risk from flash, blast, or fallout. You have accepted the inconvenience or the risk without fuss, without alarm, and without panic."<sup>28</sup>

The AEC's concern for inconveniences or honesty, however, did not extend to the 4,500 Utah and Nevada sheep who died mysteriously in 1953 after exposure to fallout. The AEC denied any causal connection between the sheep's exposure to radioactive fallout from the 1953 "Upshot-Knothole" tests and their deaths.<sup>29</sup> In a 1956 trial, Utah and Nevada sheep ranchers lost their lawsuit against the government.

But years later, Harold Knapp, a former AEC scientist who analyzed the 1953 sheep deaths, challenged the AEC's accounts. "The simplest explanation," he told a 1979 congressional committee, "of the primary cause of death in the lambing ewes is irradiation of the ewe's gastrointestinal tract by beta particles from all the fission products ingested by the sheep along with open range forage."<sup>30</sup>

In a 1982 retrial, A. Sherman Christensen, the same judge who presided over the 1956 trial, noting that "fraud was committed by the U.S. Government when it lied, pressured witnesses, and manipulated the processes of the court," ruled for the ranchers.<sup>31</sup>

### Paradise Lost

U.S. government callousness and deception extended halfway around the world. Another nuclear experiment was underway in the Marshall Islands—a de facto strategic colony of the U.S. located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Between 1946 and 1958, the U.S. exploded 67 atomic and hydrogen bombs at Bikini and Enewetok, two Marshall group atolls. Once again, the full impact and consequences of this experiment would not be disclosed for decades, and then only reluctantly.

The largest and dirtiest of the Marshall Islands blasts was code-named "Bravo." At 15 megatons — more than 1,000 times the size of the Hiroshima bomb — Bravo rained lethal radioactive fallout over thousands of unsuspecting islanders

23. Pat Broudy, "The True Facts About Radiation Exposure," *Atomic Veterans' Newsletter* (National Association of Atomic Veterans), Winter 1994, p. 6.

24. "Exercise Desert Rock VII and VIII, Final Report," AG-S-9531, November 25, 1957, Headquarters, Sixth Army, The Presidio, San Francisco.

25. John Fleck, "Lab Sent N-Clouds Adrift Over N.M.," *Albuquerque Journal*, December 16, 1993, p. A1.

26. Michael D'Antonio, *Atomic Harvest: Hanford and the Lethal Toll of America's Nuclear Arsenal* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993), pp. 119-22.

27. GAO, *op. cit.*

28. Atomic Energy Commission, *Atomic Test Effects in the Nevada Test Site Region*, January 1955, p. 1.

29. U.S. Congress, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, *The Forgotten Guinea Pigs*, August 1980, p. 4.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

31. R. Jeffrey Smith, "Atom Bomb Tests Leave Infamous Legacy," *Science*, Vol. 218, October 15, 1982, p. 266. Nonetheless, the sheep ranchers lost when Judge Christensen's decision in their favor was overturned on appeal by the government and the Supreme Court refused to hear the case.

under circumstances which remain mysterious. The people of Rongelap atoll were especially hard-hit. They were evacuated from their home islands two days after Bravo, following the absorption of massive doses of high-level fallout.

Following the Rongelap evacuation, the AEC considered repatriating the islanders to their home atoll in order to gather vital fallout data. In 1956, Dr. G. Failla, chair of the AEC's Advisory Committee on Biology and Medicine, wrote to AEC head Lewis Strauss: "The Advisory Committee hopes that conditions will permit an early accomplishment of the plan [to return the Rongelap people]. The Committee is also of the opinion that here is the opportunity for a useful genetic study of the effects on these people."<sup>32</sup>

Three years later, Dr. C.L. Dunham, head of the AEC's Division of Biology and Medicine, reiterated the AEC's interest. Studying the Rongelap victims of the Bravo blast will, he wrote, "... contribute to estimates of long term hazards to human beings and to an evaluation of the recovery period following a single nuclear detonation."<sup>33</sup> Having established the near-perfect longitudinal human radiation experiment in 1954, DoE continues to compile data from their Marshallese subjects.

It appears that AEC was guilty of both negligently disregarding the well-being of the Marshallese and then lying about its actions. On February 24, 1994, Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), chair of the House Committee on Natural Resources, convened a hearing on Bravo. Recalling weather data that demonstrated prior knowledge that islanders would receive substantial fallout, and that winds had not unexpectedly "shifted,"<sup>34</sup> Rep. Miller declared that "We have deliberately kept that information from the Marshallese. That clearly constitutes a cover-up."<sup>35</sup>

## A Pattern of Ignored Disclosures

The record of U.S. government lies, misrepresentation, and cover-ups to support its nuclear research program is incontrovertible, if not yet complete. From the inception of the U.S. nuclear program, government policy has placed military and

scientific interests above both the well-being of thousands of people and the truth. And, Secretary O'Leary's evident openness notwithstanding, the government's record in responding to earlier disclosures is not reassuring. When faced with damaging disclosures in the past, the government attempted to stonewall. When that would not suffice, the government only grudgingly responded. A few examples:

- In 1980, Congress issued a stinging report, "The Forgotten Guinea Pigs," which concluded that "the AEC chose to secure, at any cost, the atmospheric nuclear weapons testing program rather than to protect the health and welfare of the residents of the area who lived downwind from the site."<sup>36</sup>

- In 1982, the *New York Times* provided evidence that policy-makers foresaw dangers and acted to cover them up. The story included a statement by a former Army medic, Van R. Brandon, of Sacramento, that his medical unit kept two sets of books of radiation readings at the Nevada Test Site during the 1956-57 tests. "One set was to show that no one received an [elevated] exposure," Brandon told the paper. "The other set of books showed ... the actual reading. That set was brought in a locked briefcase every morning," he recalled.<sup>37</sup> DoE officials simply denied Brandon's allegations, and no further investigation was pursued.<sup>38</sup>

- In 1986, Rep. Edward Markey (D-Mass.) released a report detailing human radiation experiments that AEC and its successors conducted between the 1940s and the 1970s.



Rob Sussman

32. Dr. G. Failla, chair of the AEC's Advisory Committee on Biology and Medicine, from minutes of the 58th meeting of the AEC's Advisory Committee on Biology and Medicine, November 17, 1956, p. 10.

33. Letter dated June 26, 1959, from Dunham to D.H. Nucker, U.S. Mission to the U.N.

34. Glenn Alcalay, "Pax Americana in the Pacific," *CovertAction*. No. 40, Spring 1992, pp. 47-51.

35. Gary Lee, "Postwar Pacific Fallout Wider Than Thought," *Washington*

*Post*, February 24, 1994, p. A20. The newly established Republic of the Marshall Islands is now considering a request for new compensation in addition to the \$150 million settlement agreed to by the U.S. in 1986.

36. Thomas Saffer and Orville Kelly, *Countdown Zero* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 309.

37. Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

38. *Ibid.*



Many were designed to measure the effects of radiation on humans, and according to Markey, "American citizens thus became nuclear calibration devices for experimenters run amok."<sup>39</sup> The Markey report, "American Nuclear Guinea Pigs," described 31 grisly experiments involving 695 people who "were captive audiences or populations that some experimenters frighteningly might have considered 'expendable.'"<sup>40</sup>

When the Reagan administration refused to investigate the disclosures, the Markey report was quickly forgotten. "There was a massive public relations relationship that existed between the [Reagan] administration, the defense contractors and experimenters in America," charged Markey, "that worked very effectively throughout the 1980s. I'd say something, and I'd get attacked, and it would be a one-day story."<sup>41</sup>

### A Long, Hard Road to Justice

From the beginning of the nuclear age, the federal government not only ignored or suppressed knowledge of abuses in the nuclear experimental program, it also fought all attempts to hold it accountable for damages. A series of Supreme Court decisions dating back to 1950 bars both atomic veterans and downwinders from suing the federal government.<sup>42</sup> Veterans are denied the right to sue for injuries suffered while on active duty because the Court believes that this would interfere with "military necessity" and "national security."<sup>43</sup>

Downwinders have also encountered many obstacles in their long struggle for medical studies and compensation. One group of Utah residents who lived under the fallout during the 1950s and early 1960s finally succeeded in bringing their federal lawsuit to trial in 1982. They scored an important victory when the trial judge found the bomb tests were responsible for their cancers and awarded them damages.<sup>44</sup> But the appeals court reversed this verdict by re-defining the "discretionary function" exception to the Federal Tort Claims Act to make the government immune from lawsuits of this kind.<sup>45</sup> In essence, the court held that setting off nuclear bombs was within the discretionary power of high-ranking officials and could not be questioned in a lawsuit for damages.

After the federal appeals court stripped the downwinders of their victory, in 1990, Con-

gress finally stepped in and adopted the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act for downwinders and some groups of uranium miners. Claimants must document residence in the fallout area and that they suffer from one of 13 cancers linked to radiation exposure. The program, administered by the Department of Justice, places a ceiling of \$50,000 per claim, although many awards were smaller. Justice granted 818 claims out of 1,460 which were submitted as of January 1994.<sup>46</sup>

In 1988, Congress acted on behalf of atomic veterans, forcing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish a limited compensation plan with a \$75,000 cap. It provides "presumptive disability" to veterans who can prove that they suffer from one of a list of 13 cancers (e.g., bone, breast, skin, stomach, thyroid, leukemia, etc.), and that they were present during one or more nuclear test blasts.

Of more than 15,000 veterans' claims filed as of January 1994, only 1,401 have been approved, indicating that most

"Over the years my illness has caught up with me ... Right now I'm not working, I'm not getting compensation, I'm homeless. It's a sad situation, it's something I don't like talking about. But I do want the people to understand the type of government they have is not as honest as they perceive. — James M. Gates, Jr., atomic veteran

Dana Schuerholz/Impact Visuals



claimants are unable to qualify under the terms of the program.<sup>47</sup> One problem confronting many veterans is inaccurate or missing military records that omit service at a nuclear test site.<sup>48</sup> Another is to prepare a radiation dose reconstruc-

39. U.S. Congress, Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Power of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, *American Nuclear Guinea Pigs: Three Decades of Radiation Experiments on U.S. Citizens*, October 1986, p. 2.  
40. *Ibid.*

41. Jeff Cohen and Norman Solomon, "Nuclear Experiments Much Wider Than Reported," *Liberal Opinion Week*, January 31, 1994, p. 8.

42. *Feres v. U.S.*, 340 U.S. 135 (1950).

43. Allan Favish, "Radiation Injury and Atomic Veterans," *Hastings Law Journal*, March 1981.

44. *Allen v. U.S.*, 588 F. Supp. 247 (D. Utah) 1984.

45. *U.S. v. Allen*, 816 F.2d 1417 (10th Cir.) 1987, cert. denied, U.S. Supreme Court. See also, Howard Ball, *Justice Downwind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), Chapters 6-9.

46. Michael Janofski, "Cold War Chill Lingers for Those Who Live Near Nuclear Testing Sites," *New York Times*, January 11, 1994.

47. Paul Hoverston, "Atomic Vets: Don't Leave Us Out," *USA Today*, February 8, 1994.

48. Keith Snyder and Richard O'Dell, *Veterans' Benefits* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), Chap. 2-4.

tion that estimates the amount of exposure the veteran received. Many vets have challenged the accuracy of dose estimates prepared by a private contractor, Science Applications International. This privately held research corporation

civilians harmed by nuclear weapons testing and radiation experiments over the past half century—let alone the estimated five million U.S. citizens exposed to dangerous levels of radiation during the Cold War.

Early indications are that the White House will stake out a restrictive position. DoE head O'Leary also appears to be seeking some remedy short of compensating all categories of victims. So, apparently, is the GAO.

The GAO's report on atmospheric radiation releases provides a glimpse of the emerging strategy. In assessing the significance of the Green Run test, the GAO struck a cautious note. "The test [was not] intended to be a radiation experiment or a field test of radiobiological effects. [After] examining still classified passages [we] found that they don't refer to any such intentions."<sup>50</sup> This interpretation could provide the basis for a restrictive reading of who is entitled to compensation and follow-up health studies.

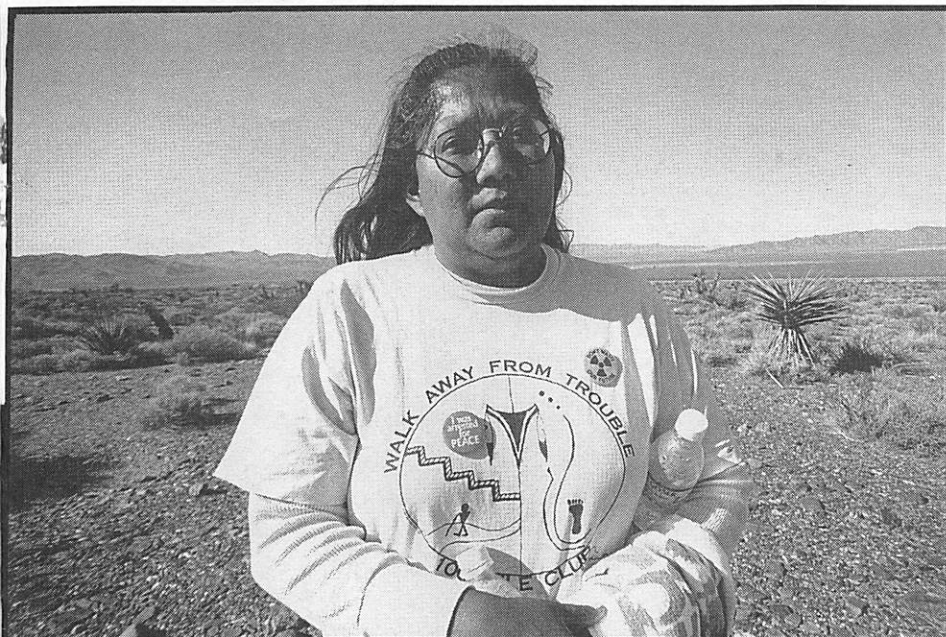
### Stacking the Deck

The Clinton administration may also be moving to head off potentially monstrous payouts to victims. To deal with the predicted avalanche of claims, as well as to fend off adverse publicity, the administration has established an advisory committee and an interagency working group to define policy. The advisory committee's mission statement, as well as the backgrounds of some of the people appointed to the panels, give victims cause for skepticism.

The President's Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments is composed of scientists, medical ethicists, and lawyers and is chaired by Dr. Ruth Faden of Johns Hopkins University. The White House announcement stated that its mission is to "evaluate the ethical and scientific standards of government sponsored human experiments which involved *intentional exposure* to ionizing radiation."<sup>51</sup> (emphasis added) When read in conjunction with the GAO report's cautious conclusion, this language appears to sharply limit possible claimants.

And one of the advisory panel members, Washington, D.C. lawyer Kenneth Feinberg, has credentials that have raised eyebrows. Feinberg played a controversial role in forging an 11th-hour settlement of the class action lawsuit against Agent Orange manufacturers in 1984. Working at the direction of trial judge Jack Weinstein in Brooklyn, New York, Feinberg helped ram through a \$180 million settlement. Although the figure seems large, it is grossly inadequate in light of the 250,000 veteran-claimants and the severity of their disabilities. Since the settlement, Judge Weinstein has blocked every subsequent lawsuit against the

(continued on p. 65)



Dana Schuerholz/Impact Visuals

**"As a youngster growing up in southern Utah, I played in the dust that came over where we lived. I am angry with this nuclear testing because it's not only affected my own health, but it's already affected my son. For the last three years, he's had problems with the bones in his legs. — Dolly Big Soldier, downwinder, Paiute activist**

includes among its stockholders Defense Department officials including Secretary William Perry and Deputy Secretary John Deutch, and one-time nominee Bobby Ray Inman. The Defense Department has little to say about potential conflicts of interest. "We're going to decline to comment on this. I don't think we would have anything that would be meaningful to say," said Pentagon spokesman Capt. Michael Doubleday.<sup>49</sup>

A final obstacle is that just having cancer isn't enough; veterans must prove they are disabled by it.

### What Will Clinton Do?

The Clinton administration is about to undergo a test of its own. The key question will be how it defines who will be considered a nuclear test victim for purposes of health research and compensation. Given the decades-long record of coverup and callousness, there is little reason to assume that the recent revelations concerning human experimentation will produce any lasting benefit for the tens of thousands of veterans and

49. Richard Serrano, "San Diego Firm Proving Ground for Defense Posts," *Los Angeles Times*, January 9, 1994.

50. GAO, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

51. White House press release, February 17, 1994.



# This Time, Armenians Are the Aggressors

Ellen Ray

&

Bill Schaap

**F**or nearly seven years, a bitter and violent conflict has raged between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, a district of Azerbaijan inhabited by a majority of ethnic Armenians. Contrary to the impression held by many Americans and Western Europeans, in this round of conflict, it is Armenia that has invaded Azerbaijan, Armenia that has occupied a fourth of Azeri territory, and Armenia that has been repeatedly condemned by the United Nations for unlawful aggression.<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, while editorials in the U.S. and other Western press have deplored the violence on both sides, Armenia is generally depicted as the victim, Azerbaijan as the aggressor, even in news stories.<sup>2</sup> This portrayal, we believe, particularly in the past few years, has stood reality on its head.

## Misinformation and Disinformation

The perception of Armenians as underdogs, as victims of aggression, is rooted in grim historical fact. Decades before Hitler's Holocaust, they were the first internationally recognized victims of attempted genocide.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, they became the embodiment of victimization, the Ottoman Turks the epitome of genocidal oppressors. And for 80 years, Armenians—both within what was for most of that time the Soviet Republic of Armenia and in the large Armenian diaspora—have remained scarred by those gruesome memories.

This legacy has led to widespread misunderstanding of the current conflict. It has been fed by a worldwide network of Armenian support and solidarity organizations that grew in



Khalid Askerov/Yurd

**Azeri refugees fleeing Armenian forces are airlifted from eastern Azerbaijan.**

the aftermath of the genocide and devastation of World War I. These groups, along with the Armenian government, promote the notion that Armenia is the current as well as the historical victim. They accuse Azerbaijan of atrocities, while suggesting that Armenia is virtually blameless. As in any war, of course, each side accuses the other of (and itself occasionally commits) atrocities, but here, the very notion of who has invaded and occupied whom has been blurred.

As the U.S. Committee on Refugees notes "[a]lmost every 'fact' relating to this conflict is in dispute." A few, however, are incontrovertible:

- While Armenia invaded Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan has never invaded Armenian territory.
- Armenian (and some "Karabakh-Armenian") forces currently occupy not just Nagorno-Karabakh, but nearly one-fourth of Azerbaijan.<sup>4</sup>
- One million Azeris, now refugees, fled or were driven from that occupied territory.<sup>5</sup>

Although the authors are two of the three co-publishers of this magazine, this article represents their own views. The authors have visited Azerbaijan and interviewed President Aliyev, and Ellen Ray is the producer of a brief documentary film about him.

1. Security Council Resolutions 822 (April 30, 1993), 853 (July 29, 1993), 874 (October 14, 1993), and 884 (November 12, 1993).

2. See, for example, Carey Goldberg, "David and Goliath in the Caucasus," *Los Angeles Times*, April 21, 1994, p. A1; and Raymond Bonner, "War, Blockade, and Poverty 'Strangling' Armenia," *New York Times*, April 16, 1994, p. 3.

3. See Christopher Simpson's *The Splendid Blond Beast: Money, Law, and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Grove Press, 1993) for a detailed

analysis of the pressures—humanitarianism being only one—that brought the Western powers to denounce Ottoman atrocities against the Armenians.

4. Alexis Rowell, "U.S. Mercenaries Fight in Azerbaijan," *CovertAction*, Spring 1994, p. 26.

5. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Faultlines of Nationality Conflict: Refugees and Displaced Persons From Armenia and Azerbaijan* (Washington, D.C.: USCR, March 1994), hereafter *USCR Report*, also notes some 300,000 displaced Armenians. According to the U.N., in Azerbaijan as of May 1, 1994, there were: 215,000 refugees of Azeri origin from Armenia; 49,000 Turks-Meskhethians from Uzbekistan; 50,000 displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh; and 920,000 displaced persons from seven other occupied regions of Azerbaijan. In May, the Azeri government added another 50,000 Azeris.

- Tens of thousands of Kurds, who have lived for centuries in the region, have also been made refugees. Since 1992, the Armenians have expelled virtually all the Kurds from Armenia,<sup>6</sup> and driven tens of thousands more from the areas of Azerbaijan where they had lived.

"In May of 1992, in order to test the waters, Armenian troops were dispatched to breach the Kurdish land between Armenia and Karabakh at its narrowest point, the old Kurdish capital of Lachin. Armenian forces from Nagorno-Karabakh stormed the city. They looted Lachin and set it ablaze. The entire population of over 25,000 was forced out. All vestiges of Kurdish culture, historic monuments and textual repositories in the city were destroyed."<sup>7</sup>

### Conflicting Arguments

While most Armenians do not deny either occupying Nagorno-Karabakh and other substantial sections of Azerbaijan, or driving out those Azeris who had not already fled their advance, they counter their critics with two main justifications. The first invokes their historical persecution. Armenians see themselves as clinging to a small, steadily eroding homeland surrounded by hostile forces. In Armenian eyes, that vulnerability is heightened by the rising nationalism of the post-Soviet era. The zones they have captured are needed to ensure their defense, they say, meant to provide a buffer zone against further persecution. The second justification is that of self-determination. Since the majority of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh is Armenian and has lived there for generations, they claim that the enclave has the right to declare itself independent.

To the first argument, the Azeris point out that it was not Azeris who were the persecutors of the Armenians, and, in any event, this time it is they, not the Armenians, who are victims of aggression. They counter the argument of self-determination with the principle of territorial integrity.<sup>8</sup> The United States Committee for Refugees put it like this:

In conflict are not simply two warring parties, but two warring principles of international law and conduct. Enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, as well as in earlier international accords and treaties, are two principles that increasingly appear to be mutually exclusive: first, the notion of self-determination—that a people has a right to choose political representation that reflects its interests; second, the inviolability of borders—that existing borders, however they might have come about historically, ought not to be changed by force.<sup>9</sup>

No matter what the justification, clearly the Armenians have violated the principle of international law, enshrined not only in Helsinki, but in the United Nations Charter, prohibiting "the use of force against the territorial integrity ... of any state."<sup>10</sup>

### Historical Claims

Competing claims in the Caucasus have deep historical roots, with all disputants starting and stopping history where it best supports their case. The area, between the Black and the Caspian Seas, between north Asia and south Asia, has long been a crossroads. Ancestors of the people who now call themselves Georgians, Armenians, and Azeris have all been there for more than a thousand years. Over the centuries, small groups settled in one valley, one mountain top, or another. The fragmentation was exacerbated by religious and secular wars and formalized when the victors drew and redrew borders. The Tsars in the 18th and 19th centuries, the Soviet Union in the 1920s, and the independent former Soviet Republics in the 1990s all faced the same situation: Each of the three nations of the Caucasus—Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan—though predominantly

6. Kurds made up 1.7% of Armenia's population. ("You Too, Armenia?" *Kurdish Life*, No. 9, Winter 1994, published by the Kurdish Library, Brooklyn, N.Y., pp. 1, 2.)

7. *Ibid.*

8. By best estimates, in the 1930s, ethnic Armenians were 94.4% of the 160,000 people of Nagorno-Karabakh; in 1979, Armenians comprised 76% of 123,000 people in the enclave. Except for a few percent other—mostly Kurd—the rest of the population was Azeri. Now, the population is virtually 100 percent Armenian. (*USCR Report*, p. 9.) The Azeris also claim that the Armenian majority in Nagorno-Karabakh dates only to 1828, the conclusion of the last Russo-Persian War. Some Caucasians have an expansive sense of time. The authors recently met a Georgian with whom they discussed the secessionists in Abkhazia. The Abkhazians, he said, were "new-comers," with no real claim to the area. "How long have they been there?" we inquired. "Only five hundred years."

9. *USCR Report*, p. 2.

10. Charter of the United Nations, Article 2, Section 4.







Azertaj

### Azeri President Aliyev laying flowers on graves at the Cemetery of Martyrs, Baku.

populated by its own ethnic group, had enclaves with substantial minorities, and in some cases majorities, ethnically related to one of the neighboring countries.<sup>11</sup>

Not all of the boundary decisions were the result of wars. In 1975, in the Helsinki Accords, each Soviet Republic, including Armenia and Azerbaijan, reaffirmed the existing boundaries. In 1992, when Armenia and Azerbaijan were each invited by the U.N. to become members, they joined as nations with the existing, internationally recognized borders.<sup>12</sup>

The essence of the Armenian complaint and the crux of the Azeri refutation is that each time borders were redefined in the Transcaucasus, Nagorno-Karabakh was not "given" to Armenia, but rather was accepted as an integral part of Azerbaijan. The Armenian argument is somewhat circular. That Armenians have often asked for Nagorno-Karabakh (and each time been refused) is not proof that the request is just.<sup>13</sup>

11. While some enclaves were settled in ancient times, many others are of more recent vintage, often dating to wars of the 18th and 19th centuries. Also, after the Russo-Persian war of 1828, Azerbaijan was divided between the two combatants, a situation that prevails to this day. More than half of what had been Azerbaijan became part of Persia, now Iran. More than twice as many ethnic Azeris (15 million) live in Iran as in Azerbaijan. (*USCR Report*, p. 5.)

12. Security Council Note S/23496, January 29, 1992, informed the Republic of Armenia that admission would be recommended to the General Assembly. Note S/23597, February 14, 1992, did the same for the Republic of Azerbaijan. The notes cited each nation's "solemn commitment to uphold the purposes and principles of the charter, which include the principles relating to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the non-use of force...." When admitted to the U.N. on March 3, 1992 (General Assembly Resolutions 227 and 230), neither challenged the existing borders upon which the admissions were predicated.

13. The claim that Stalin "took" Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia is simply not true. Stalin "retained the lines of the map that separated Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia"; he "appeared to want to maintain the territorial status quo in Nagorno-Karabakh." *USCR Report*, pp. 8, 9. Instances when the borders were drawn or reconsidered, and when Nagorno-Karabakh remained part of Azerbaijan, include the conclusion of the 1813 Russo-Persian War; the conclusion of the 1828 Russo-Persian War; during the 1918 British occupation; in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution in 1919; at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 (when "the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh" signed "an agreement accepting Azerbaijan jurisdiction"); and when the two nations became Soviet Republics in 1920. (See the excellent chronology in the *USCR Report*, pp. 20-22.)

Nor, of course, is the fact that boundaries have been settled for hundreds of years proof that they are just.

### The Current Conflict

The current conflict dates to early 1988, when, as the Soviet Union was weakening, the local government council in Nagorno-Karabakh petitioned Moscow for unification with Soviet Armenia. The Azeri minority on the council boycotted the February 20 vote, which the Politburo in Moscow quickly rejected. A few days later, Armenians rioted in Stepanakert, the provincial capital, killing two Azeris and wounding dozens. On February 27, when word of that incident reached Sumgait, north of Baku, Azeris rioted and killed 31 Armenians.<sup>14</sup> In September, Armenian mobs attacked Azeris in Stepanakert and Khojaly; by November there were demonstrations in most Azerbaijan cities and growing harassment of Armenians.

From late 1988 to early 1990, there was a massive flight of Azeris from Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh and a simultaneous flight of Armenians from eastern Azerbaijan to Nagorno-Karabakh or Armenia. By the end of 1990, some 300,000 refugees from each side had crossed each other's path.

In December 1989, Armenia announced a unilateral annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh; in January, anti-Armenian riots broke out in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. On January 13 and 14, at least 46 Armenians were killed. The Soviet Union sent troops to restore order on January 20, and in the next few days they killed at least 122 Azeris and wounded about 600.

In August of 1990, as the USSR was collapsing, both Armenia and Azerbaijan declared independence. Armenia did not

14. Most Armenians consider the Sumgait riots, which they call a pogrom, the start of the current conflict. Most Azeris consider the local council petition and the riot in Stepanakert as the start. The point is somewhat moot, as the ethnic conflicts have simmered and boiled off and on for hundreds of years. There is also considerable debate over the extent, if any, to which the various riots on either side have been encouraged, or even planned, by the authorities. See *USCR Report*, p. 11. The history outlined in this subsection is from the *USCR Report*, pp. 10-18.

reintroduce the annexation resolution, but assisted the ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh in driving out virtually all remaining Azeris.<sup>15</sup> Then, on December 10, 1991, the Karabakh Armenians held a referendum calling for independence. A majority of voters in Nagorno-Karabakh—fewer than 40,000, in a country of more than seven million—approved. On January 6, 1992, they declared the independent Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.<sup>16</sup>

At this point the entire conflict changed, and, we would say, the Armenians lost any claim to acting within the standards of international law and conduct. First, they attacked the remaining Azeris in Nagorno-Karabakh. In February 1992, at least 159 Azeris died in a massacre in the town of Khojaly; the remaining 2,000 fled. In May, the same thing happened in Shusha. Then Armenian forces expanded beyond Nagorno-Karabakh and, in May 1992, invaded Azerbaijan. At first, they opened a corridor linking Armenia and the enclave. Soon, however, they expanded operations to occupy a half dozen other regions of Azerbaijan bordering on Nagorno-Karabakh. This push created the million refugees, both Azeri and Kurd, who fled mostly to unoccupied Azerbaijan.

### The Russian Factor

The current politics of the region are no less complicated than the tortuous history of the ethnic conflicts. Azerbaijan, like Armenia, became independent in August of 1990, as the USSR was collapsing. It is the only former Soviet Republic with a mixed economy that gives high priority to social welfare programs and, along with Lithuania, has no Russian military bases.

Its current president, Heydar Aliyev, has had a stormy relationship with Moscow. For years he led the Communist Party in the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan, and for a time was head of the Azerbaijan branch of the KGB; he became First Deputy Prime Minister of the Soviet Union, and one of the few Muslims on the Soviet Politburo.

While he initially supported Mikhail Gorbachev, he developed serious—ultimately irreconcilable—political differences with him. Aliyev opposed the slogans of *perestroika* and argued that Gorbachev was leading the country away from socialism.<sup>17</sup> He also disagreed with Gorbachev's positions—developed by a close group of

Armenian advisors—relating to the Caucasus. After the central government did nothing to stop the armed secessionists, sent Soviet troops into Azerbaijan, and then refused to investigate the killings committed by those troops, Aliyev resigned from the Communist Party.<sup>18</sup>

Boris Yeltsin, like Gorbachev, has supported Armenia, despite commercial involvement in Azeri oil production. "For the moment," BBC correspondent Alexis Rowell noted, "Russian and Armenian interests coincide. ... It is highly unlikely that any Armenian offensive is undertaken without a green light from Moscow."<sup>19</sup> But contrary to Rowell's suggestion, the Azeri government does not "adhere to Moscow's imperial design." Indeed, relations have become strained. Azerbaijan recently joined the junior NATO conference, Partnership for Peace, in large part out of concern for Russian domination. The Russians further antagonized the Azeris by sending a member of the Russian Parliament to Stepanakert in occupied Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>20</sup>



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President Aliyev with military advisors at the front.

### The U.S. Stake

The U.S., like Russia, has tended to discount the Azeri side of the conflict. There have, however, been differences between the approaches of the Department of State which is more "even-handed," and Congress, which is more openly pro-Armenian. Although one would not know it from the U.S. media, four times in 1993 the U.N. Security Council condemned Armenian inva-

15. There is considerable dispute over the extent to which the Karabakh Armenians were directly supported and assisted by the Armenian government at the outset of the conflict. Armenia was far stronger militarily than Azerbaijan, and it seems clear that the great bulk of the anti-Azerbaijan forces at this point are Armenians, not Karabakh Armenians. See Steve Levine, "When the Victim Becomes the Bully," *Newsweek*, November 29, 1993. Many more Soviet Army officers were Armenian than Azeri; see Goldberg, *op. cit.*, p. A6.

16. No nation, Armenia included, has formally recognized the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. (*USCR Report*, p. 15.)

17. Dilara Seyid-Zade, *Lines from Biography of A Great Politician* (Baku: Azerbaijan Publishers, 1994), pp. 12-13. Azerbaijan was the only country in the former USSR and Eastern Europe that voted for Cuba in the November 3, 1993. U.N. General Assembly condemnation of the U.S. embargo. See also Valery Boldin, *Ten Years That Shook the World* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), p. 170.

18. Heydar Aliyev, *Steadfast Position* (Baku: Azerbaijan Publishing House, 1994), pp. 30-35. In the U.S. press, Aliyev is typically referred to as "a Brezhnev-era KGB chief" (*New York Times*, August 1, 1993, p. E14) and "the old Communist Party and KGB boss" (*Washington Post*, June 30, 1993, p. A20). Oddly enough, these leading journals never refer to Boris Yeltsin as "the old Moscow Communist Party boss," which he was for years.

19. Rowell, *op. cit.*

20. *Azerbaijan Newsletter*, Vol. 2, No. 8, March 31, 1994, p. 2. The Azeris now call Stepanakert by its pre-Soviet name, Khankendi.



sions of Azerbaijan and reaffirmed "respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity," as well as "the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory."<sup>21</sup>

Despite these resolutions and clear evidence of Armenian territorial aggression, an influential Armenian lobby has affected U.S. sentiment, particularly in Congress. Numerous congressional testimonials—sponsored, reasonably enough, by those with the most Armenian-American voters in their districts—are inserted in the *Congressional Record* every year. Until recently, the lobby pushed for passage of a formal resolution condemning the Ottoman Turks for the 1915 massacre. Armenian support for such a resolution has been matched only by the Turkish opposition. Turkey, a major U.S. ally, and the third largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid, has, so far, prevailed in this fight.

Lately, however, the Armenian focus has shifted to condemnation of Azerbaijan. Typical was a charge by Rep. Nancy Pelosi (from California, the state with the most Armenian-Americans) that "The Azerbaijanis, like the Ottoman Turks in the early 20th century, are attempting to solve a political problem with a violent solution."<sup>22</sup> Sen. Donald Riegel (Michigan, also with many Armenian-Americans) referred to the "brutal blockade" imposed by Azerbaijan on Armenia and condemned "Azeri aggression against the Armenian people."<sup>23</sup>

Even the *Washington Post* took note. Since "Armenia has a substantial diaspora in the United States and Azerbaijan does not," only it "is in a position to apply" constituent pressures on Congress.<sup>24</sup> That pressure has been so effective that Congress condemned Azerbaijan for closing its border with Armenia, while failing to denounce Armenia for invading

and occupying Azerbaijan. On a more practical level, on October 24, 1992, Congress passed a law prohibiting government aid, including humanitarian aid, to Azerbaijan.<sup>25</sup> No restrictions whatsoever have been imposed on Armenia, epitomizing what the U.S. Committee for Refugees described as "the almost reflexive U.S. tilt on the Armenian side." Indeed, the Committee concluded, "the U.S. response has been particularly unbalanced and unhelpful."<sup>26</sup>

### Reason vs. Reasons

Armenia may argue that it had sufficient reasons for invading and occupying a large part of Azerbaijan, but it does not deny that it has done so. And Armenia may argue that the U.N. Security Council was repeatedly wrong in condemning it, but it does not deny that the condemnations have occurred. As always, in conflicts that trace their roots back through the centuries, where disputants justify their actions with chants of vengeance, there is enough blame and blood to go around. But that does not mean that, at a particular moment, the blame is necessarily equal. In this case, the Armenians are the aggressors and should be condemned as such. If any lasting solution is to be found, the international community must continue to struggle against "ethnic cleansing;" the Armenians must withdraw from occupied territory; the parties to the conflict must work with the international community for a peaceful solution; and the U.S. must lift the congressional ban on humanitarian aid to Azerbaijan. •

21. Security Council Resolutions 822 (April 30, 1993), 853 (July 29, 1993), 874 (October 14, 1993), and 884 (12 November 1993). The quoted language appears in each resolution. Neither the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, nor the *Los Angeles Times* reported on a single one of these four Security Council actions. The *New York Times* did, though, during this period run a Reuters dispatch summarizing U.N. opposition: "U.N. Demands Armenians Give Up Conquests," August 19, 1993, p. A14.

22. *Congressional Record*, April 29, 1992, p. H2798.

23. *Congressional Record*, April 21, 1993, p. S4759.

24. "Tilting to Armenia," *Washington Post* editorial, March 11, 1993, p. A28.

25. The Act, PL 102-511, Title IX, sec. 907, imposes sanctions until "the President determines, and so reports to the Congress, that the Government of Azerbaijan is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh."

26. *USCR Report*, p. 36.

### In Memoriam: Jim Wilcott

It is with profound sadness that we note the death of *CovertAction* co-founder and former CIA finance officer Jim Wilcott on January 27th in Concord, California. Jim and his wife Elsie worked from 1957-66 in Japan, Miami, and at CIA Headquarters. In 1966, they resigned in protest over the Agency's involvement with organized crime, declaring themselves socialists, and became outspoken activists and critics of the CIA and the war in Vietnam.

Jim wrote twice for *CovertAction Information Bulletin*: "How the CIA Recruits Foreign Diplomats," (October 1978), and "The CIA and the Media: Some Personal Experiences," (December 1979-January 1980). We remember Jim with this excerpt from the latter:

*Like the tiger who having once tasted human flesh never loses his hunger for it, so the CIA will never lose its appetite for subversion, infiltration, and manipulation of the media. This is one more reason why I advocate the complete dismantling of the CIA and the enactment of strong legislation to protect the U.S. and foreign media from abuses by the government.*

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# The Battle for the Soul of South Africa

Chris Vick

The "New South Africa" has finally arrived.

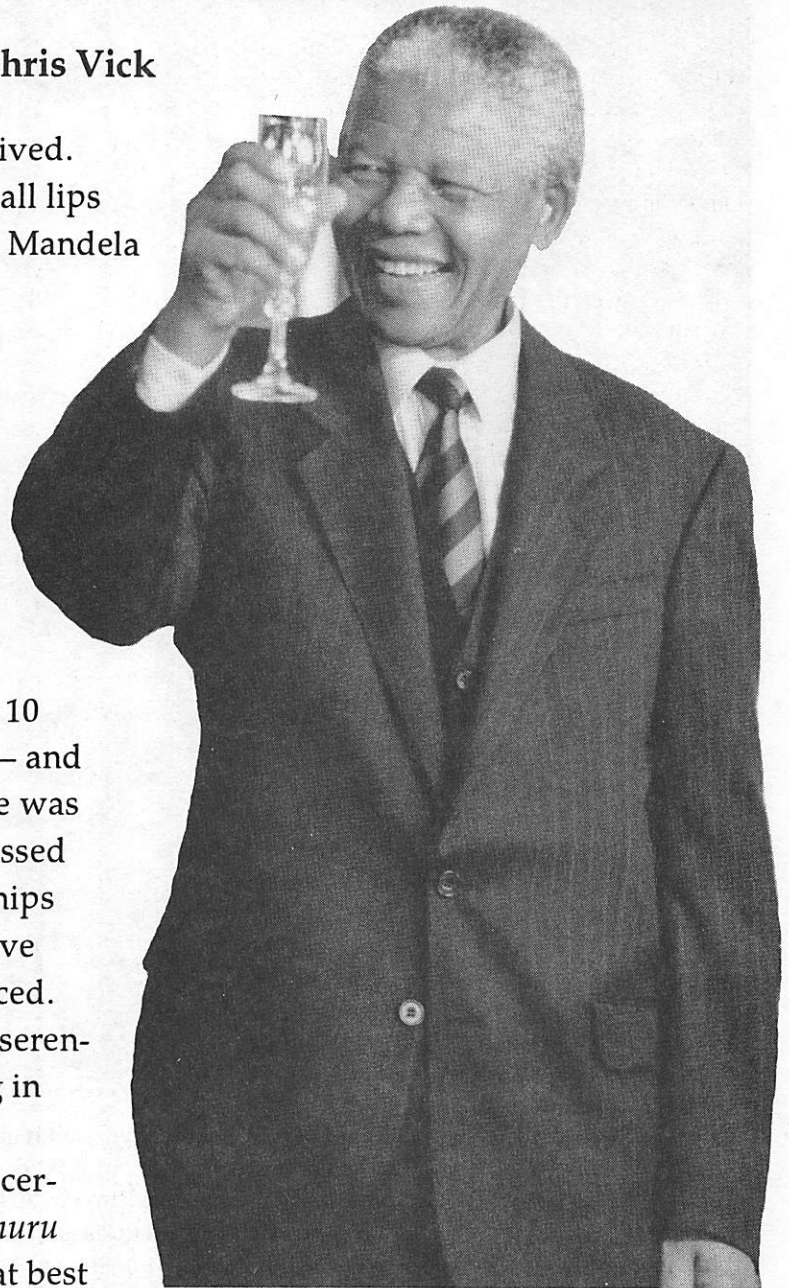
The name, rich with hope, has been on all lips since the February 1990 release of Nelson Mandela from a 27-year imprisonment.

The reality arrived four years later. The definitive event was the announcement on May 5, 1994, of the African National Congress' (ANC) resounding election victory — a crowning glory for Africa's oldest liberation movement.

But the new South Africa came in other forms, too. There was the poignancy and dignity of Mandela's May 10 inauguration as the country's first black — and democratically-elected — president. There was also the sheer delight of the people, expressed at street parties which burst out in townships and villages around the country at least five days before the final results were announced. There was also the amazing patience and serenity which marked the three days of voting in one of the world's most violent countries.

An ANC victory had always seemed as certain as sunrise. This was, essentially, an *uhuru* election — and the ANC was the party that best encapsulated the struggle for liberation.

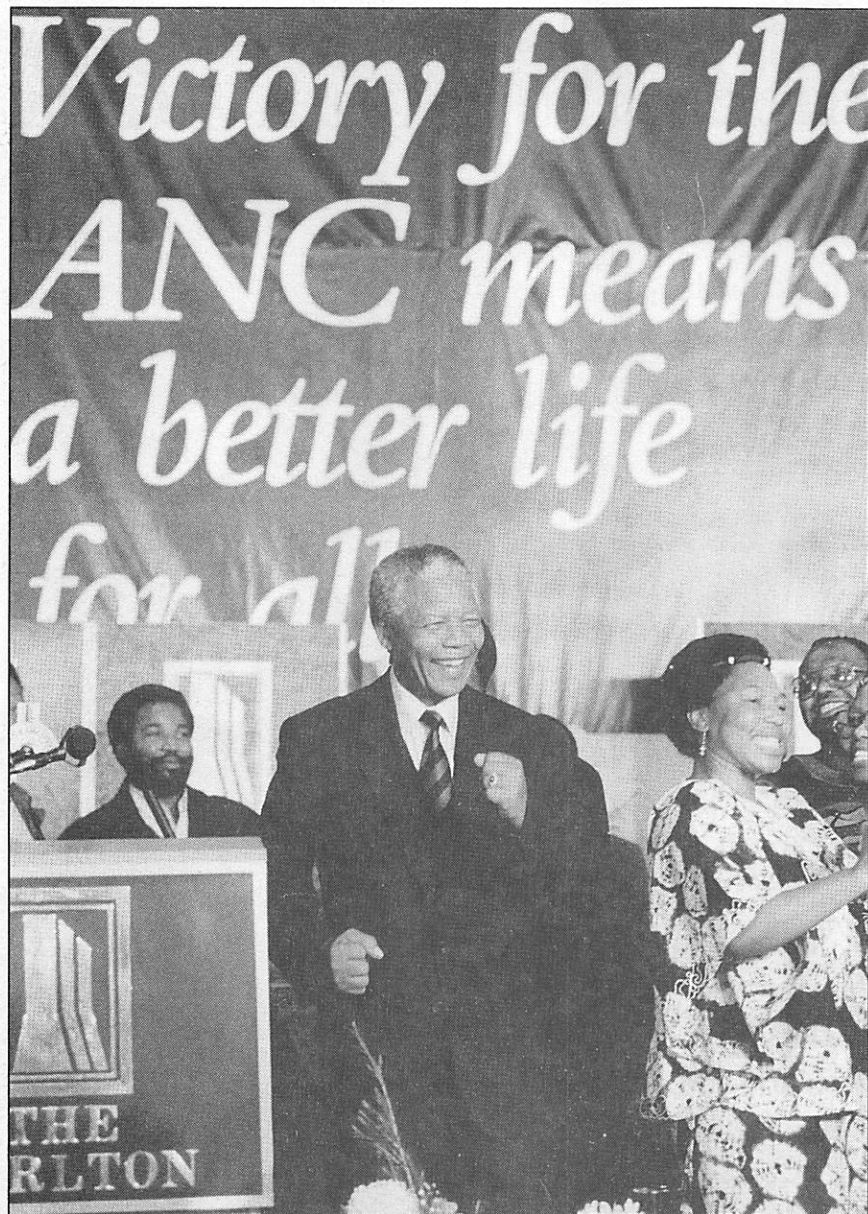
The sense of rupture with the past was evident in the sheer joy that rose into the township skies in early May. The air bristled with the knowledge that, for the first time in South Africa's history, state power had been wrested from the hands of the oppressor. Never had the hopes of the majority been closer to realization. And never was the immensity of the task facing South Africa's first democratically elected government — to deliver to its citizens the material fruits of liberation — more daunting.



Chris Vick, a freelance journalist, is former editor of *Work In Progress* magazine.

Photo: Nelson Mandela declares victory. Paula Bronstein/Impact Visuals.





Paula Bronstein/Impact Visuals

The scene at Johannesburg's Carlton Hotel (above) said it all. Outside, in the city streets, militant youth burned posters of F.W. de Klerk, did the *toyi-toyi* (a celebratory dance popularized by the ANC's army, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*) and chanted slogans praising the guerrilla army's successes. Inside, in the luxury of the five-star hotel's banquet hall, grey-haired ANC leaders danced to a brass band, linking arms with local business friends and sympathizers from the U.S. and Europe.

The official election results would be announced four days later.<sup>1</sup> But for the ANC, with less than 50 percent of the votes counted, it was already time to celebrate. Almost a century of struggle, it is clear, had achieved an overwhelming majority in South Africa's first non-racial elections.<sup>2</sup>

1. Despite over 10,000 South African deaths from political violence between 1985 and the 1994 election, not a single incident was reported during the three days of voting — a remarkable achievement in such a fragmented and violent society.

2. Two out of every three South Africans voted for the ANC. The final election results are: African National Congress: 62.65%; National Party: 20.39%; Inkatha Freedom Party: 10.5%; Freedom Front: 2.17%; Democratic Party: 1.73%; Pan-Africanist Congress: 1.25%. The ANC received a total of 12.2 million votes out of almost 19 million cast.

## The ANC's Dilemma

Even in victory, in celebration of an event that has finally united South Africa's diverse population, the ANC's dilemma is obvious: how to juggle black aspirations and white fears — how to deliver to the masses outside the Carlton without scaring those in the ballroom.

The centrality of the problem was evident in the ANC's election campaign. The party put a lot of time (and money) into

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*Unlike the apartheid era, in the new South Africa, "class rather than race will determine who's in and who's out."*

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allaying the suspicions of the white population — which still holds the key to the country's economy. (See box.)

It was evident also in an interview given by Mandela days before his victory speech: "If there is anything I am conscious about, it is not to frighten the minorities."<sup>3</sup>

## Reconstruction or Reconciliation?

The challenge facing Mandela and his new Government of National Unity (GNU) is, on the face of it, a choice between reconstruction and reconciliation.

Reconstruction in this context means radical change — the rapid implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP, see box, p. 45), which formed the basis of the ANC's election campaign. Mandela, and the ANC, are fully committed to implementing the RDP. As the new president said in his victory speech:

We must, without delay, begin to build a better life for all South Africans. This means creating jobs, providing education, and bringing peace and security for all. The RDP ... outlines the steps we are going to take in order to ensure a better life for all South Africans. It is going to be the foundation upon which the Government of National Unity is based.<sup>4</sup>

3. Interview in the *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), "Whites' contribution will be critical," May 1, 1994.

4. Quoted in the *Star* (Johannesburg), May 3, 1994.

But, as Mandela pointed out in the same speech, the new government is also committed to reconciliation: "I hold out the hand of friendship to the leaders of all parties, and their members, and ask them to join us in working together to tackle the problems we face as a nation."<sup>5</sup>

Intending to speed up this process, Mandela has included several former foes — including ex-President F.W. de Klerk and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi — in his new cabinet. These erstwhile ANC enemies are unlikely to change their attitudes and have the potential to limit the pace of reconstruction — regardless of what Mandela says about his desire to push ahead with the RDP.

The de Klerks and Buthelezis — and their powerful allies within the domestic and international financial elites — could tie the new government's hands, limiting the implementation of some of the more radical changes suggested in the RDP.

### The 50 Percent Solution

This policy of reconciliation troubles those for whom the liberation struggle has always incorporated a definition of justice transcending not only lines of color, but of class. There is more at stake, noted researcher Mike Morris, than the new South Africa president's desire to make friends. "Powerful forces are leading us towards a new 'Two Nation' society, a 50 percent solution that will allow some South Africans to embrace opportunity and privilege, but banish the rest to the margins."

And, unlike the apartheid era, in the new South Africa, "class rather than race will determine who's in and who's out."<sup>6</sup> This process has been underway for some time, and is likely to have a profound impact on the nature of change and the pace at which it will be experienced (or not experienced) by most South Africans.

A key point of contention has been how much power will be surrendered to the forces of neoliberalism embodied in the policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Even before it assumed power, the ANC signed an agreement with these international finan-

5. *Ibid.*

6. Mike Morris, "Who's in? Who's out?" *Work In Progress*, February 1993.



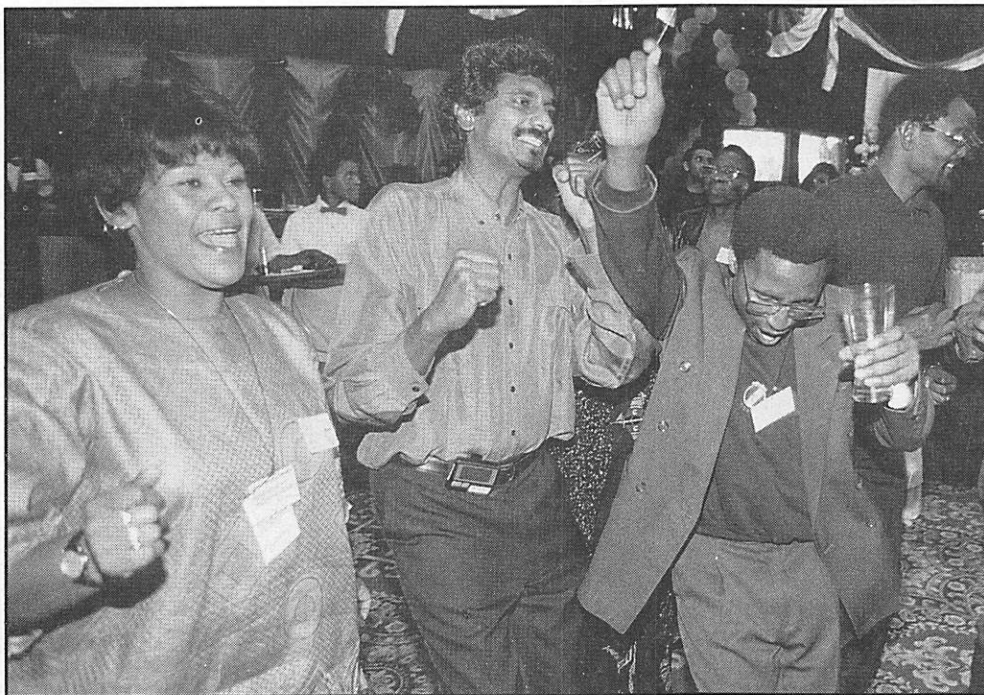
Fernando Molerres/Impact Visuals

**Poverty and homelessness will challenge the new ANC government. The legacy of inequality and deprivation from apartheid South Africa is staggering:**

- The GDP growth rate has declined from almost 6% in the 1960s, to 4% in the 1970s, to barely 1% in the 1980s.
- Per capita income has declined in each of the past 12 years.
- Over half of black families and 2.6% of white families live in extreme poverty.
- At least 7 million are homeless.
- Millions of blacks live in shacks with no sewage systems, water, or electricity.
- Half the population is illiterate.
- Malnutrition causes 61% of infant deaths among black families.
- Per capital income for whites is 9.5 times higher than for blacks, 4.5 times higher than for mixed races, and 3 times higher than that for Asians.
- Of the 36 countries for which data are available, it has the most unequal development: The poorest 40% of households earn 4% of total income, the richest 10% earned more than 50%.
- Only 1.6% of directorships in the top 100 companies on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) are held by black Africans.
- Five corporations own 80% of all stocks traded on the JSE.
- Of the 3 black-owned companies traded, two were established last year.
- All black-owned businesses account for less than 1% of economic output.
- Black Africans fill 1% of senior management positions, compared to 98% held by whites.
- Fewer than 10% of the 700,000 African businesses are in manufacturing or related fields.

William Minter, "The Morning After," *In These Times*, May 16, 1994, p. 14 (from *Washington Notes on Africa*, Spring 1994); and the South African Institute of Race Relations, "State of the Nation," January 1994.





Ansell Horn/Impact Visuals

**COSATU Gen. Sec. Jay Naidoo (c), minister without portfolio, celebrates ANC victory. He pioneered the reconstruction process and will oversee its implementation.**

cial institutions.<sup>7</sup> IMF officials have been in South Africa for over a year, and in December the ANC agreed to start making adjustments to the local economy — such as scrapping import surcharges (which bring in about \$500 million a year) in return for an IMF loan of \$850 million.

Since then — and in particular since the election results were announced — foreign governments have been falling over each other to pledge aid to the new South Africa. The U.S. has promised \$600 million, the British government \$120 million, and the European Union \$128 million.<sup>8</sup>

These potential investors have been reassured by statements from ANC economist Tito Mboweni, quoted days after the election as favoring “investor-friendly policies” to build a vibrant South African economy.<sup>9</sup> Mboweni and other officials from the ANC’s Economics Department — who now hold key cabinet portfolios in the new government<sup>10</sup> — have indicated that they are keen to enter into a “pact” with local business which would see this trend continue.<sup>11</sup>

Early confirmation of this conciliatory trend can be found in the 1991 declaration by senior ANC negotiator Thabo Mbeki — now Mandela’s deputy — that the National Party’s economic policies “are not really very different from the

7. Mandela was quoted in *Business Day* (Johannesburg), March 24, 1994, as saying the ANC has already negotiated with the IMF, the World Bank and Asian commercial banks for the funds necessary for economic reconstruction.

8. *Business Day*, May 5, 1994.

9. *Ibid.*

10. ANC economics head Trevor Manuel has been appointed Minister of Trade and Industry and his deputy Tito Mboweni has been appointed Minister of Labor.

11. *Business Day*, April 22, 1994, quotes Trevor Manuel as calling for a “pact” between government which, according to Business South Africa president David Brink, will result in “co-operation between business and government ... [being] a lot closer in future.”

position [the ANC] has been advancing.”<sup>12</sup> In addition, as Mike Morris points out, there is little pressure on South African conglomerates to open up ownership to local capital,<sup>13</sup> black capital is being brought on board through joint business ventures and a black political elite is being wooed by white-owned trade and industry.

Morris, like many others on the left, worries that the egalitarian ideals of the revolution may be traded for the tangible rewards promised by international capital. “Redistribution,” he concludes, “is being viewed as a political accessory that can be tagged onto measures aimed at restoring economic growth; it is not seen as being integrally connected to — in fact part and parcel of — long-term sustainable growth.”<sup>14</sup>

Canadian writer John Saul has recognized that “[t]he pressures upon the ANC to identify ‘upwards’ within the worldwide and local class systems are strong. That there should be those within the movement who will be inclined to so identify need not surprise us.”<sup>15</sup> After all, some within the ANC-in-exile had all along harbored aspirations that they were petty-bourgeois nationalist in character — and they have been joined by others of similar stripe upon return.

Indeed, as the elections approach an accelerating bandwagon effect is drawing even more such elements to the ANC’s colors. ... [I]f ‘democracy’ is to be the name of the game, [they will] not be will be terribly sorry to see a liberal democracy substituted for a popular one.

And of course, the same is true of the various international forces — the IMF and World Bank, the corporate sector and international aid community — that now crowd in upon the movement from all sides.<sup>16</sup>

### Centrist Switch

The ANC’s movement toward the center has not gone undetected by some of the more militant elements in the ANC and in its alliance partners, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and South African Communist Party (SACP).

12. Interview in the ANC journal, *Mayibuye*, March 1991.

13. Morris, “Who’s in? Who’s out?” *op. cit.*

14. John Saul, “Thinking the Thinkable: Globalism, Socialism and Democracy in the South African Transition,” *The Socialist Register*, April 1994.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*

# South Africa's Reconstruction & Development Program

South Africa, a country already obsessed with acronyms, has a new one to add to its lexicon: the RDP. The Reconstruction and Development Program stands at the center of the ANC's attempts to transform South Africa. It formed the core of the liberation movement's election manifesto, and now holds out hope for the millions of South Africans who voted for the ANC in the April election. It is, in essence, a five-year program to rebuild South Africa and to correct the imbalances imposed by the apartheid system.

Its main features over the next five years are:<sup>1</sup>

- A minimum of one million new houses.
- Running water and flush toilets for more than a million families.
- Electrification of 2.5 million rural and urban homes.
- Free health care for children under five.
- Adequate pensions for those over 60.
- A public works program to create 2.5 million jobs.
- Ten years' free and compulsory education for all South Africans.
- Universal affordable access to telephones.
- The development of an effective, publicly-owned public transport system.

## The Cost of Undoing Apartheid

The reconstruction process will be overseen by one of the people who pioneered its development. General-secretary of COSATU, Jay Naidoo, has been appointed minister without portfolio in the Government of National Unity (GNU).

Naidoo estimates the RDP will cost South Africa — "the cost of starting to undo the damage caused by apartheid" — \$10 billion. A large portion of this money will obviously come from foreign donors. But Naidoo is optimistic<sup>2</sup> that the balance will be obtained by redefining priorities in the existing budget: "Defense currently gets some \$3.5 billion against \$500,000 for housing. The defense secret account alone is 2.5 times larger than the housing budget. That is a contradiction we cannot contain."<sup>3</sup>

An additional \$150 million a year devoted to South Africa's nuclear program will be cut.

An "apartheid dividend" will also become available with the dissolution of the separate structures set up by the National Party government. As the new Minister of Trade & Industry, Trevor Manuel, explains, that under apartheid there were "14 education departments, each with a director general earning R280,000 a year plus car and house. We need a single education department." Manuel says there is still about \$1.3 billion in the budget that maintains apartheid infrastructures: "The embassy of Bophuthatswana [a former

bantustan] in Paris is worth more than the South African embassy in the same city. Bophuthatswana still maintains a large foreign service even though it no longer exists."<sup>4</sup>

## The Left and the RDP

If it works, the RDP could substantially change the face of South African society. Union leader Philip Dexter recently acknowledged that the program is "a clear alternative to the neoliberal agenda of the National Party and sections of business... [I]t offers a viable means to repair the devastation wrought by apartheid and capitalism."<sup>5</sup>

However, Dexter has also warned that, for this to happen, the left has to have a firm hand on the RDP wheel. "The RDP presents an opportunity to set our struggle for socialism back on its feet," he wrote recently. "The demand for socialism must become central to the RDP ... by gradually infusing the RDP with socialist ideals, a socialist program for South Africa can be developed." In the wrong hands, the RDP "might be restricted to a social democratic process that seeks to reform, not transform capitalism." Already, he points out, "the ANC is subject to tremendous pressure from local and international capital, forcing it towards the center. There is a very real danger that the left will soon find itself marginalized, thanks to its own inadequate strategic planning and its lack of unity and coherence." In addition, "capitalists will no doubt try to hijack the RDP for their own ends. They might even push for the implementation of an alternative program that limits the scope for democratization and transformation."<sup>6</sup>

So far, despite the warning signs, there is little indication of exactly how the South African left intends to wage its next round of struggle — the struggle for control of the reconstruction process.

Although Dexter has made a few suggestions,<sup>7</sup> it remains to be seen to what extent the left can influence the process. Given its poor representation in the new Government of National Unity<sup>8</sup> and current tendencies in the ANC, there is little reason to believe the battle will be an easy one. •

4. *Green Left Weekly*, op. cit.

5. Dexter, former general secretary of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union, is now a member of the National Assembly. He is one of the 20 trade unionists assigned to the ANC by COSATU.

6. Phillip Dexter, "Make the RDP make the Left," *Work In Progress*, February/March 1994.

7. Dexter's suggestions include decommunitizing certain economic resources and services. Housing, he suggests, should be provided through associations and be offered as non-sellable property rather than rented or privately owned units. He also proposes tax incentives to consumer and producer co-operatives. "Such limited but specific objectives can begin to unite working class people in struggle around concrete socio-economic issues. This could begin to weld together a militant but mature class-conscious force for social change that is distinct within the broad democratic movement, but not separate from it."

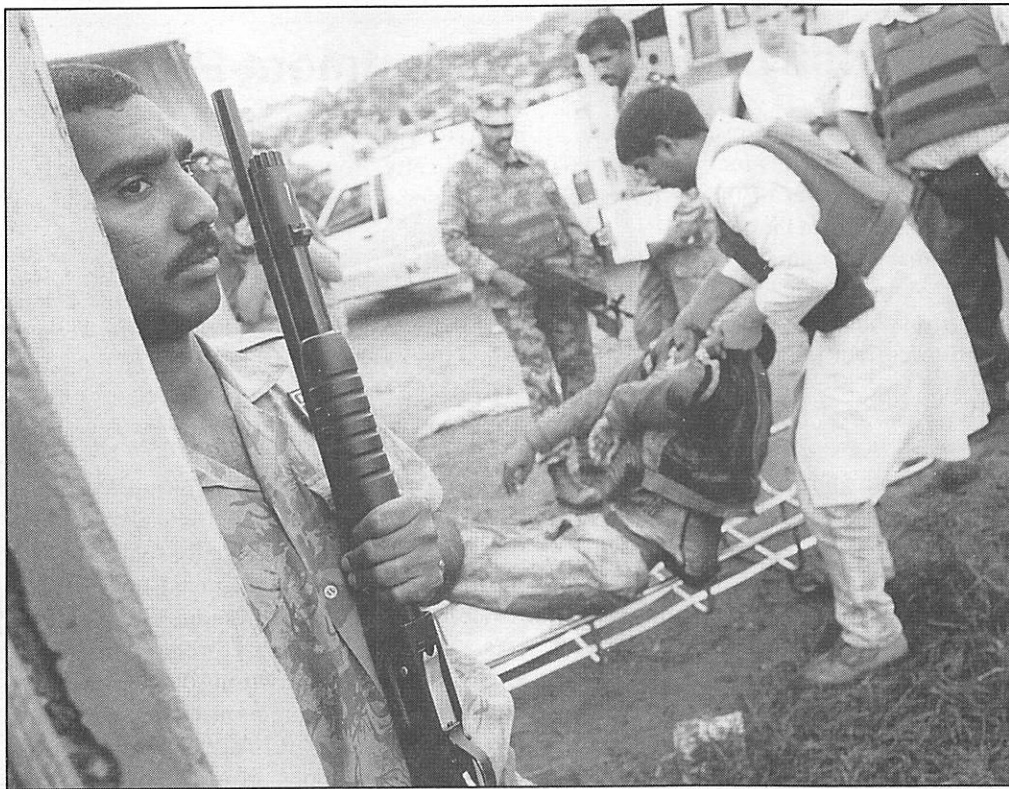
8. Only two senior communists have been appointed to ministerial posts — SACP chairperson Joe Slovo is the new housing minister, and former SACP central committee member Sydney Mufamadi heads the police ministry. The remainder of the GNU government is made up of moderate ANC leaders, and a few members of the National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party.

1. "The Reconstruction and Development Programme," published by the ANC's Department of Information & Publicity, April 1994.

2. See "Cuts in military to fund SA's reconstruction" in *Green Left Weekly* (Melbourne, Australia), April 27, 1994.

3. *Ibid.* The secret defense accounts are used for a range of SA Defense Force covert operations and are not presented to parliament for ratification.





Eric Miller/Impact Visuals

**Police guard removal of ANC supporter killed in pre-election violence by Inkatha. Apartheid has engendered a history of violence and simmering feuds.**

As SACP official Fareed Abdullah wrote a few weeks before the election:

Other classes are beginning to consolidate themselves in the ANC. The bourgeoisie and the middle class are trying to steer the movement in directions that suit their class interests ... This [trend] is going to be compounded [after the election] by the movement of thousands of ANC activists into the state and civil service — enabling an already-existing middle class within the ANC to assert itself more strongly.<sup>17</sup>

“It is this cadre that will find common cause with counterparts in the current government and civil service,” Abdullah continues. “It is also likely to link with a movement of ‘progressive’ individuals into industry, and will be enthusiastically courted by local and international capital to service its interests. This will be a ‘class’ full of contradictions, and it need not be specifically anti-working class. But it will have a profound effect on the nature and pace of change.”<sup>18</sup>

Key SACP strategist Jeremy Cronin, one of the architects of the RDP, expressed similar concerns:

Electoral and statist illusions are quite rife within the movement. It has been a problem of liberation movements in Africa that they’ve thought there is a dramatic

moment called ‘the transfer of power’ which means you think transfer, not transformation, of power. The same power gets transferred into different hands. Armed struggle, negotiations, elections, or a combination of these, is the mechanism for the ‘transfer’ of power. This has to be guarded against.

“There may be tens of thousands of leading activists of the ANC alliance who will constitute the new stratum of administrators, members of parliament, soldiers, military officers,” Cronin goes on. “Part of the internal battle is to hold them so that they are there on behalf of the struggle and don’t become detached from it. The neoliberal agenda is the reverse: to promote this new stratum and consolidate a new stability for capital, for imperialism.”<sup>19</sup>

Cronin points out that the tensions between reform and radical change have existed within the ANC alliance since the movement was unbanned in 1990: “This struggle — which is ultimately a class one — has been going on for the past four years. [And we can expect] more robust struggle between the components of this consensus after the election.”<sup>20</sup>

### The New Insiders

This battle for the soul of the ANC is complicated by the fact that the movement is, to a large extent, going to take on two forms after the election: a parliamentary ANC, heading the Government of National Unity, and an extra-parliamentary ANC.

Cronin is aware of the dangers: “There are marked tendencies towards careerism [in the ANC]. A large portion of the ANC has — in my view rather mindlessly — gone onto the electoral lists. It means the capacity for the ANC to continue as an extra-parliamentary force will be in question.”<sup>21</sup>

Fellow SACP strategist Fareed Abdullah is more blunt: “We can expect serious class struggle, inside and outside parliament, accompanying the popular demands for social reform like land, jobs, housing, water, transport, health care, electrification and social security. The ANC can lead this struggle inside parliament — but not outside. The seat to lead

19. Norm Dixon, “Beyond the transfer of power,” interview with Jeremy Cronin, *Green Left Weekly* (Melbourne, Australia), April 27, 1994.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

17. Fareed Abdullah, “Taking the Gap,” *Work In Progress*, April/May 1994.

18. *Ibid.*

extra-parliamentary struggle will have been vacated. A new leadership must emerge to occupy that space.”<sup>22</sup>

### Enter the Left

Given the way the ANC is heading, the task of ensuring implementation of the RDP will fall largely on the shoulders of those to the left of the mainstream ANC — primarily its alliance partners, COSATU and the SACP. But South Africa’s organized left — which fought the election under the ANC banner, and therefore has no tangible proof of its own support — is now fairly weak and in disarray.

COSATU is suffering from major internal problems, largely as a result of the assignment of key officials to the ANC. Faced with its greatest challenge, it is probably weaker now than at any other stage in its nine-year history.

The extent of the crisis is revealed in a discussion document circulating within the union federation, “Towards developing a long-term strategy.”<sup>23</sup> Among the litany of problems it lists are:

- An exodus of unionists to the ANC — including key strategists such as COSATU general-secretary Jay Naidoo and National Union of Mineworkers assistant general-secretary Marcel Golding — which has left the federation lacking clear direction.

- An inability to cope with changing circumstances.
- A loss of perspective and influence: COSATU affiliates have become involved in a range of joint negotiating forums — such as the National Economic Forum. Although these

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*“Redistribution is being viewed as a political accessory that can be tagged onto measures aimed at restoring economic growth; it is not seen as being integrally connected to — in fact part and parcel of — long-term sustainable growth.”*

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—Mike Morris

venues are intended to ensure participation in decision-making on national issues, they often do little more than lock key union officials into discussions which have little influence on policy. As the COSATU document states: “We are involved in every forum under the sun. If we are not involved, it is because we do not know of the forum or have not been invited to participate.”<sup>24</sup>

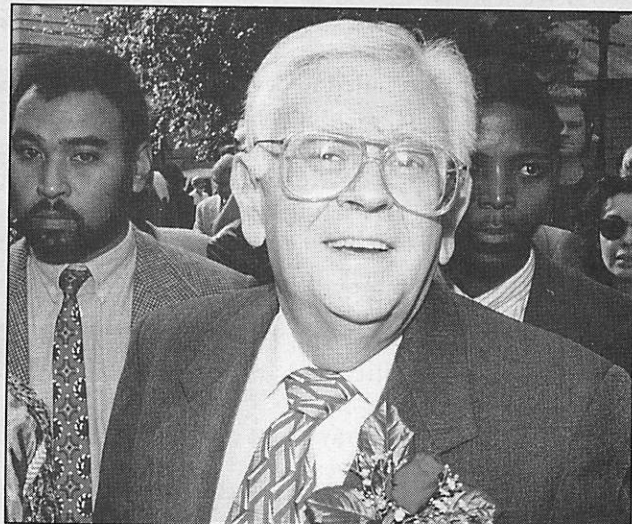
- A lack of participation by members and shop stewards.
- A lack of cohesion in strategies being taken by affiliated

22. Abdullah, *op. cit.*

23. “COSATU faces organizational crisis,” *Southern Africa Report* (Johannesburg), Vol. 12, No. 15, April 15, 1994.

24. *Ibid.*

## On the South African Left



Eric Miller/Impact Visuals

**Joe Slovo, SACP leader and new minister of housing.**

**COSATU: Congress of South African Trade Unions**, with just over 1.3 million members, is the largest organized force on the left. As with the ANC, the country’s largest trade union federation reflects a broad political spectrum. Its 14 member unions include the National Union of Metalworkers and the National Union of Mineworkers. Headed by senior SACP member Sam Shilowa.

**SACP: South African Communist Party** membership has increased to over 60,000 since it was unbanned in 1990. Its last congress, held in 1991, committed the Party to a broad alliance with the ANC and COSATU. It has yet to publish a post-election program.

**SANCO: South African National Civic Organization** is just over two years old. SANCO is an unpredictable marriage of township community organizations concerned with local issues such as housing, with varying degrees of influence in local politics. Although its leadership has a socialist orientation, its own political direction is centrist. Several key members have already joined the new government and more are likely to leave and move into local government, traditionally dominated by whites.

**Black Consciousness Groups/Africanists: Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and Azanian People’s Organization**, although having minimal support (PAC received 1.25% in the April 1994 elections), are likely to be part of attempts to build a broad socialist forum.

**SASCO: South African Students’ Congress**, aligned with the ANC, is debating participation in the conference of the left and developing a Young Socialists movement.

South Africa also has several tiny ultra-left formations such as the Workers’ List Party (.02% in the April 1994 election) which have organized outside the ANC. •



unions. The net effect being, as *Southern Africa Report* points out, "COSATU finds itself trapped in an organizational crisis perhaps not far off the magnitude of the repressive days of the 1960s and early 1970s, when black unionism was forced into dormancy."<sup>25</sup>

The SACP, too, has failed to develop a plan for the post-apartheid period — its last program, adopted at the 8th SACP conference, held in 1991, committed the party to its broad election alliance with the ANC to defeat apartheid. Cronin admits the SACP has been "a little bit invisible,"<sup>26</sup> despite the fact that its membership has increased to over 60,000. This low profile results largely from the party's emphasis on "reinforcing the ANC project" which left the SACP "still battling with its identity and role."<sup>27</sup>

The net effect of this array of difficulties is a severely weakened left — one which is unlikely to have the strategic skills or influence to drive the reconstruction process.

### Conference of the Left

The left, aware of the problems, is moving to develop a more consolidated position. The starting point is "The Conference of the Left" or South African Socialists' Conference. Scheduled for July, it is co-convened by COSATU and the SACP. Motivation for the conference came from the National Union of Metalworkers (NUMSA), which proposed "a conference of the left consisting of working class organizations with a mass-based constituency."<sup>28</sup>

Inspiration came, in part, from the São Paulo Forum which was meant to facilitate a socialist renewal in Latin and South America.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, the organizers of South Africa's socialist conference hope to hold a southern African version of the São Paulo Forum — involving left-wing organizations in Angola, Namibia, Mozambique and beyond — within the next year.<sup>30</sup> The short-term objective is to ensure the left has more of an impact on the direction taken by the "parliamentary" ANC — by organizing a socialist bloc within the structures of power to promote the RDP.

The long-term goal is to "pursue a left consensus beyond the Congress movement"<sup>31</sup> — if possible, by creating a left

platform rather than a new left party. The Socialists' Conference, which calls for as broad a forum as possible,<sup>32</sup> may hold the key to the organizational growth of the socialist project in South Africa, and to the rapid implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Program.

It may also mark the maturing of a new phase of the revolutionary struggle for justice in South Africa.

### The Battle for the Future

The battle that will be fought out at this forum and in every township, union hall, and party meeting for years to come is for the soul of the ANC, for the heart of the revolution. Much has already been won through incalculable sacrifice and dedication, but even amid the exhilaration of victory, disquiet lingers.

The core of the disquiet is that wealth, privilege, and resources will remain concentrated in relatively few hands, that while the color of the handshakes over deals cut in well-appointed board rooms will change, the deals themselves will benefit the same interests as in the apartheid past. The new South Africa is still a pressure cooker, now heated by different sets of demands. The new leadership must not only deliver the material benefits of freedom, it must placate the

IMF/World Bank and the giant corporations. Increasingly, these needs will be in conflict and those in power will have to choose sides. The international financial community is exerting intense pressure on the ANC leadership. It is promising great rewards in the form of loans and investment if the ANC accepts the usual terms: structural adjustment programs and expanding indebtedness. It holds out, as well, the threat of punishment like that applied to Cuba, if the new government veers too far toward economic self-determination.

Within this explosive context, cooptation and conciliation are often confused with pragmatism and reconciliation. If the victory is to be that of the real majority — the impoverished, undereducated, underemployed, poorly housed blacks — this confusion must be replaced with a vision of a new South Africa in which the needs of the people come first. It will require a balancing act almost as impossible as the ANC victory itself.

of its alliance with the African National Congress. What's being proposed for the Conference of the Left is the development of a left formation which operates *outside* the Congress movement, *i.e.*, outside the ANC alliance.

32. In *Work In Progress*, April/May 1994, for example, Abdullah argues that the event "must be as inclusive as possible." Invitees should include all trade unions, civic groups, "political formations that define themselves as socialist," sectoral and mass organizations such as the National Education Crisis Committee, and socialist individuals from non-governmental organizations and publications.



25. *South Africa Report*, *op. cit.*

26. Cronin, *op. cit.*

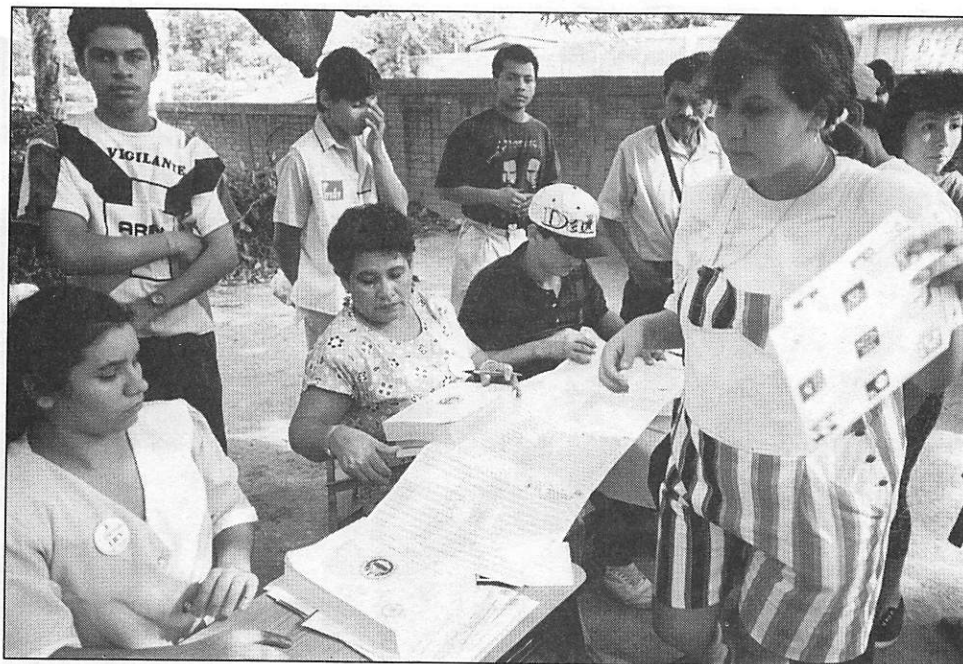
27. *Ibid.*

28. Chris Vick, "Conference of the Left," *Work In Progress*, November 1993.

29. *Ibid.* The São Paulo Forum was started four years ago to develop dialogue between left-wing parties and movements in South and Latin America. The 1993 forum was held in Havana, Cuba.

30. Vick, "Conference ...," *op. cit.*

31. See *ibid.* The notion of a "left consensus beyond the Congress movement" refers to the fact that the left has opted, until now, to work within the confines



# Salvadoran Elections Bring Technical Democracy

Mike Zielinski

**I**n the past, El Salvador's elections were as transparent as the clear plastic bags in which voters deposited their highly visible ballots. Held in the midst of civil war, the elections of 1984 and 1989 were cooked up for international consumption as a fig leaf for a U.S.-backed military dictatorship. The U.S., eager to offset the murderous image of the Salvadoran military, provided financial backing and tight supervision. It then ratified the results as "free and fair" regardless of the degree of manipulation, intimidation, or fraud, and declared them proof that El Salvador was a democracy with a civilian government.

U.S. response to the latest elections, held on March 20 with a runoff a month later, was at least consistent. The official U.S. observer mission declared there is "no evidence that there was a deliberate attempt to disenfranchise prospective voters or to harm any party."<sup>1</sup> The U.N. at first agreed, but as evidence accumulated was forced to rescind its original endorsement. The *New York Times* reported that "United Nations officials now say the assessment was generous."<sup>2</sup>

Mike Zielinski is political director of CISPEs, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, and has written widely on Central America. He observed the April run-off election. Photo: Vic Minterlang/Impact Visuals. Woman with ballot prepares to vote in San Salvador suburb.

1. Statement of the Official Presidential Delegation to the March 20, 1994 Elections, March 21, 1994.

2. "Salvadorans Vote as Leftists Feel Cheated," *New York Times*, April 25, 1994, p. A9.

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*Just as the Clinton administration disguises military intervention as humanitarian action, ARENA is trying to mask its anti-democratic practice with new varieties of technical fraud which preserve government power while projecting the illusion of democracy.*

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This "election of the century" — like that in South Africa a month later — capped a complex process of negotiations. It was supposed to redefine political power in the post-civil war era and formalize the sweeping political, judicial, electoral and military reforms mandated by the January 16, 1992 peace accords. Every political office was on the ballot, including those for 262 municipal posts, the 84-seat Legislative Assembly, and the presidency. For the first time, former rebels from

the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) would be able to run for office without their names turning up on a government-sanctioned hit list.

In keeping with the new era, the ruling ARENA (Nation-

alist Republican Alliance) Party introduced new techniques to maintain El Salvador's long history of dirty elections. In the 1970s, the means were crude: The army simply seized ballot boxes and declared its candidates winners. In the 1990s, faced with intense international scrutiny, ARENA had to be more resourceful.

## Jaime Crow

The new electoral process bears a closer resemblance to voting under the Jim Crow segregation of the U.S. South than to elections traditionally conducted by military juntas in Latin America. But it also reflects America's newer and more sophisticated techniques as exported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the Agency for International Develop-



ment (AID): Equate democracy with elections and then control the electoral process through manipulating public relations, infusing cash, redistricting, passing laws, and establishing electoral mechanisms — all favorable to the party of choice. AID contributed several million dollars to “electoral reforms.” In 1989, with U.S. support, ARENA, founded by death squad leader Roberto D’Aubuisson in 1982, was able to take power through a system engineered to hold down a historically oppressed and largely illiterate population — through legal means.

In most previous elections, ARENA won between 35 and 45 percent of eligible voters.<sup>3</sup> These totals, achieved under a restricted franchise, appear to represent the right-wing party’s base. ARENA draws support not only from the commercial and military elites but also from a population traumatized by 12 years of civil war. Two years into the peace many Salvadorans, lacking a firm commitment to the left or the right, feared an FMLN victory would trigger a right-wing backlash and plunge the country once again into chaos. ARENA played on this anxiety with ads on a par with the Willie Horton campaign. Right-wing propaganda compared El Salvador to Nicaragua and Cuba, and suggested that an FMLN government would abolish religion, murder the elderly, and impose food rationing. The right distributed photos of left coalition candidate Ruben Zamora embracing Fidel Cas-



Vic Hinterlang/Impact Visuals

**Left coalition presidential candidate Ruben Zamora campaigns in a market.**

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***Right-wing propaganda suggested that an FMLN government would abolish religion, murder the elderly, and impose food rationing.***

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tro while Zamora countered with photos of himself kissing the Pope’s ring.

Given its minority status, ARENA’s pre-election strategy hinged on limiting the number of voters in general and excluding the opposition’s supporters in particular. These efforts paid off on election day — only 53 percent voted. For the run-off the participation dropped to 45 percent. This

3. *Toward a Level Playing Field: A Report on the Post-War Salvadoran Electoral Process*, Hemisphere Initiatives, p. 22. Again, the decision of who was and who was not eligible was based on considerations that often had more to do with political allegiance than with citizenship or age.

meager turnout was effected in two main stages. A pattern of intimidation and exclusion which marked the months leading up to the vote was followed up with a series of slowdowns, inaccurate polling lists, and vote-buying on election day. Shortly after the polls closed, FMLN leader Francisco Jovel denounced a widespread pattern of irregularities as “a type of fraud. It is not the fraud like the military dictatorships did stuffing ballot boxes and taking them to the barracks. It is fraud in the sense that people were denied their constitutional right to vote. We are talking about enormous amounts of people who wanted to vote today and were frustrated.”<sup>4</sup>

### **The Pre-Election Fear Factor**

Fear, a difficult factor to quantify, helped hold down the voter turnout. In the aftermath of a 12-year war, in which government security forces killed tens of thousands of civilians, nightmares of state-sponsored terror still haunt many communities.<sup>5</sup> A gruesome reminder was provided just days before the March vote when up to two dozen skeletons were excavated from a well at a farm used as a National Guard interrogation center in the early 1980s.<sup>6</sup>

Nor was the terror a relic of the past. Since February of 1992, at least 32 FMLN members have been assassinated. While this toll does not begin to match the scale of wartime

4. Douglas Farah, “Salvadoran Rightists Take Election Lead,” *Washington Post*, March 21, 1994, p. A1.

5. *From Madness to Hope: 12 Years of War in El Salvador*, U.N., March 15, 1993. The U.N. “Truth Commission” reviewed the testimony of more than 2,000 people while examining many of the war’s worst atrocities. The Commission assigned responsibility for 85 percent of the cases under investigation to the army or other security forces. The Commission confirmed Roberto D’Aubuisson’s responsibility in planning the March 1980 assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero.

6. Annie Cabrera, “Human Bones Found in Well in Former War Zone,” *Associated Press*, March 9, 1994.



Donna De Cesare/Impact Visuals

### ARENA candidate Armando Calderón Sol addresses a youth rally.

killings, it sends an unmistakable signal to anyone considering a vote for the FMLN. In the weeks before the elections, death squads stalked the left. In mid-February, the U.N. documented "the murders in recent months of at least 15 persons of some political importance."<sup>7</sup> The victims included three FMLN candidates and a dozen campaign workers for various parties.

On election eve, Americas Watch described the human rights situation:

Heavily armed men in civilian dress still execute political opponents, leaving behind the initials of notorious death squads operating in the past, issue death threats in the name of these squads, and engage in 'social cleansing' killings. The lack of serious government investigations contributes to the sense that these activities are at least tolerated by state agents.<sup>8</sup>

People feared not only for life, but also for livelihood. In the weeks before the vote, ARENA factory owners convened meetings of their workers and threatened to permanently close down the plants if the left won.<sup>9</sup> In a country where the combined rates of under- and unemployment reach 70 percent, these threats were not taken lightly.

### More Than One Fifth Barred From Voting

The most obvious and pervasive manipulation was through control over the list of eligible voters. U.N. monitors estimated

that a minimum of 150,000 registered voters, from a total electorate of 2.4 million, were denied the voting cards needed to participate in the election.<sup>10</sup> Calling the March and April elections "discredited," the *New York Times* noted that irregularities were sufficiently widespread to make "the number of those who could not vote a considerable percentage of the total."<sup>11</sup>

"It's a tragedy," a senior United Nations official said, "that with so much at stake in these two elections, the results are so blemished."<sup>12</sup>

Widespread exclusion was the predictable result of an electoral system which compels potential voters to clear a bureaucratic minefield. Registration is a five-step program requiring multiple trips to electoral offices far distant from peasant communities. In addition to those who never received voting cards, another

74,000 applicants were rejected because they could not meet the stringent paper documentation required by the ARENA-dominated electoral tribunal.<sup>13</sup> A disproportionate number of these people lived in communities which ARENA, in past elections, had only narrowly carried.<sup>14</sup>

### Technical Fraud at the Polls

With the pattern of technical fraud already in place, instances of exclusion and intimidation multiplied on election day. "Before the voting," noted a senior U.N. official, "there was wide-

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*Widespread exclusion was the predictable result of an electoral system which compels potential voters to clear a bureaucratic minefield.*

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spread mistrust of the electoral system. Now there is even more."<sup>15</sup> A catalogue of hundreds of irregularities on election day gathered by international observers and opposition parties explains why.<sup>16</sup> Among the most pervasive:

10. *ONUSAL Report, op. cit.*, p. 5.

11. "Salvadorans Vote..." *op. cit.*

12. *Ibid.*

13. *ONUSAL Report, op. cit.*

14. El Salvador Free and Fair Election Project, Center for Democracy in the Americas and the National Agenda for Peace in El Salvador, Washington, D.C.

15. "Salvadorans Vote..." *op. cit.*

16. "Findings of the Field Teams of the U.S. Citizens' Elections Observer Mission," March 28, 1994.

7. *ONUSAL Electoral Report*, February 18, 1994, p. 7.

8. *Darkening Horizons: Human Rights on the Eve of the March 1994 Elections*, Human Rights/Americas Watch, March 1994, p. 3.

9. The U.S. Citizens' Elections Observer Mission, "Round 2 Interim Report," April 29, 1994.



## U.S. Shields Death Squads

Just as ARENA has switched to more sophisticated methods to keep its grip on power, the Clinton administration has altered the style of U.S. policy in El Salvador without changing the substance. Although Central America no longer ignites blazing debates in Congress, the U.S. continues to exert enormous influence over the region's politics. El Salvador is still one of the top ten recipients of U.S. foreign aid in the world. For all its public promotion of a foreign policy based on democratic values and human rights, the Clinton administration has shown no more willingness to challenge ARENA than it has the generals in Haiti. The administration's denial of electoral irregularities exemplifies this approach.

During the Salvadoran civil war, U.S. strategy was geared to excluding — or eliminating — the FMLN. With the January 1992 Peace Accords, Washington accepted the former guerrillas as a fact of political life. It then used aid and loan programs to encourage the left to participate in a political system in which the government sets the rules. In the lead-up to the election, the U.S. policy makers pressed for just enough reform to ensure that an ARENA victory would have a patina of legitimacy, but not so much that El Salvador could stray from the IMF-style austerity programs which dominate the hemisphere's economies.

Through it all, the U.S. backed ARENA. The Clinton administration has stuck with it after declassified U.S. government documents confirmed the party's sponsorship of death squads. The trail went all the way to the top. State Department files made public last November linked the ARENA presidential candidate, Armando Calderón Sol, to the activities of a kidnapping ring run by death squad chief Roberto D'Aubuisson.

The Clinton Justice Department is moving slowly to declassify FBI files which are believed to document the role of Miami-based Salvadorans in directing and financing death squad operations in El Salvador. Inside El Salvador, opposition members contend that the delay reflects a desire to shield ARENA leaders from any more embarrassing revelations — at least until after Calderón Sol has been safely inaugurated. •

\*Clifford Krauss, "U.S., Aware of Killings, Kept Ties to Salvadoran Rightists, Papers Suggest," *New York Times*, November 9, 1993, p. A4.

- Between 5 and 15 percent of those who had cleared the pre-election obstacle course and obtained valid voting cards were turned away from the polls because their names were omitted from the officially prepared voting lists. U.N. sources conservatively estimate about 100,000 people may have been denied the right to vote on election day.<sup>17</sup> Once again, areas likely to be decided by a narrow margin had a larger reported number of violations.<sup>18</sup>
- While the living were barred, the dead were sometimes more fortunate. Government refusal to clean up the lists before election day left thousands of corpses on the rolls, including ARENA founder Roberto D'Aubuisson, dead more than two years, and ex-President José Napoleon Duarte, even dead by two years. Fellow dead were checked as having cast ballots. Many voters noted the miraculous resurrections with less than religious awe.
- Polls opened late throughout the country, forcing thousands of people to wait up to three hours in a scorching sun. After being shunted from table to table, many became discouraged and left without casting a vote.
- The government reneged on pre-election promises to provide all voters free public transportation to the widely scattered polling stations. While bus service concentrated on zones where ARENA supporters predominated, many potential left party voters were stranded with no way to reach the polls.
- In 11 of 14 provinces, observers received reports of ARENA buying votes. Party workers offered people coupons for food or cash redeemable after they voted. In Ilobasco, ARENA members filmed people as they voted, a blatant violation of ballot secrecy.<sup>19</sup>
- While not as omnipresent as in past elections, the army was selectively deployed. Northern provinces, which served as the FMLN's rear guard during the war, were the site of early morning army patrols on election day. Army helicopters transported ballot boxes, ominously circling communities in former war zones and buzzing polling sites.
- The deployment of 6,000 agents from the National Police increased the level of intimidation. Under the peace accords, the National Police were supposed to have been supplanted by a new, civilian force prior to the election. In January, President Alfredo Cristiani stopped the demobilization of the National Police, leaving in place security forces linked to persistent human rights abuses during the war. On election day, National Police agents frisked voters en route to polling areas where FMLN supporters formed a majority.

Although not part of the pattern of fraud, the delay or derailment of key accords, especially the lack of demilitarization and failure to implement land reform programs, set the stage for many of the abuses that followed.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

18. El Salvador Free and Fair Election Project, *op. cit.*

19. Findings of the Field Teams of the U.S. Citizens' Elections Observer Mission, March 28, 1994.

### Sins of Omission/Commission

U.S. press coverage of the election detailed many of these irregularities, but emphasized that they were incidental, not intentional, and had no bearing on the results. The *New York Times* attributed the "confusion [to] a lack of practice."<sup>20</sup> Media accurately noted that in a country where 45 percent of the population is officially illiterate (and many more functionally so), it proved nearly impossible for a substantial number of voters to locate their names on the voter lists or to reconcile minor differences in the spelling of up to four surnames.

Other observers were not so quick to give the government the benefit of the doubt. Representative Nydia Velázquez (D-N.Y.), on hand as an official observer, summed up common concerns: "Many of the problems we witnessed did not result from the ineptitude by electoral workers. These irregularities were predictable and they had arisen in previous elections, yet the Supreme Electoral Tribunal made no serious effort to resolve them."<sup>21</sup>

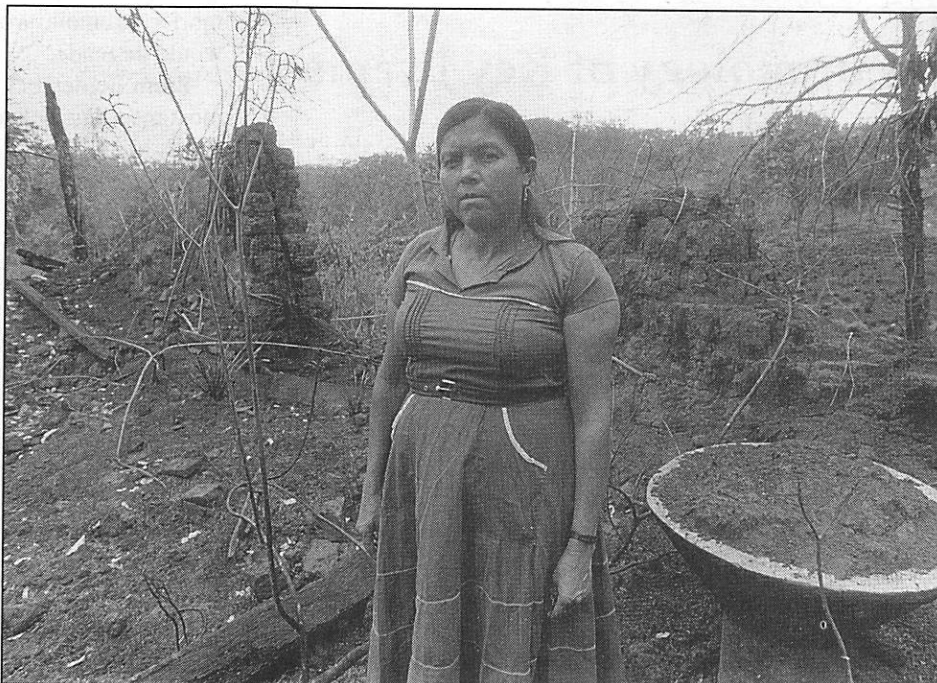
By the time these well-planned exercises in manipulation were carried out, crude and easily detected post-election fraud, such as destroying ballot boxes, was largely irrelevant.

But not completely. Although most of the manipulation occurred before or during the election, little was left to chance. The vote count stretched out for two weeks when computer tallies broke down and failed to match those arrived at by hand. In a move reminiscent of the tricks used to install Carlos Salinas de Gortari as president in Mexico's disputed 1988 election, technicians from opposition parties were expelled from the central computer room on election night and not re-admitted for more than 12 hours.

### Back to the Future

Even with all these advantages, ARENA fell short of the majority needed to obtain a first round presidential victory. The FMLN won a quarter of the seats in the Legislative Assembly, where a coalition of right-wing parties will have a razor-thin majority.

ARENA's efforts to disenfranchise people had the most severe impact at the local level. During the 1991 elections, nearly one-third of the municipal elections were decided by less than 100 votes.<sup>22</sup> This time, the outcome in dozens of municipalities was decided by a handful of votes as ARENA-dominated electoral commissions succeeded in annulling



Donna DeCesare/Impact Visuals

**The legacy of human rights abuses haunts El Salvador and, many charge, affected the results of the election. Here, Rufina Amaya, the only survivor of the 1981 El Mozote massacre, in which the U.S.-trained Atlacatl Battalion killed hundreds of villagers, stands before the town's ruined church.**

large numbers of ballots improperly marked by barely literate supporters of the FMLN.

Although the left succeeded in blocking a first round victory, death squad-linked Armando Calderón Sol, mayor of San Salvador, won a decisive victory in the run-off. ARENA retained its grip on power, but the FMLN emerged as the country's second strongest political party, eclipsing the Christian Democrats, who for most of the 1980s were the cornerstone of Washington's counterinsurgency strategy. El Salvador will now reach back to the past for its political future; the same forces which battled to a stalemate during 12 years of civil war have established themselves as the country's leading post-war political forces.

### The More Things Change

While the elections overshadowed nearly everything else in El Salvador in recent months, the country's future stability rests on the final implementation of the U.N.-brokered peace accords. El Salvador's election demonstrates that the U.S. and its Third World allies are adapting to the times. When Ronald Reagan and George Bush offered unconditional support to authoritarian regimes fighting guerrilla wars, ARENA was able to fully unleash its paramilitary units. These death squad units are still in place, as evidenced by the string of murders which preceded the election, but less frequently activated. Just as the Clinton administration disguises military intervention as humanitarian action, ARENA is trying to mask its anti-democratic practice with new varieties of technical fraud which preserve government power while projecting the illusion of democracy. •

20. Howard French, "Polls Indicate Victory by Rightist in Salvador Election," *New York Times*, March 21, 1994, p. A3.

21. Press Conference Statement of Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez, March 23, 1994.

22. El Salvador Information Project, March 24, 1994.



## Chronology of Key Events

**October 1968** Army overthrows Pres. Belaunde; Gen. Velasco becomes president.

**August 1975** Velasco ousted by Gen. Morales. Montesinos sent to backwater posting.

**1980** Democracy restored, Belaunde elected president; Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) begins insurgency.

**1985** Alan García elected president.

**May 1988** Army massacre at Cayara.

**July 28, 1990** Fujimori elected president; soon after, with Montesinos, begins planning *auto-golpe*, self-coup.

**November 3, 1991** Massacre by military at "pollada," a chicken barbecue in downtown Lima.

**April 5, 1992** In self-coup, Fujimori dissolves parliament and seizes dictatorial powers.

**July 18, 1992** La Cantuta massacre.

**November 13, 1992** Attempted coup against Fujimori — meant to restore democracy — fails.

Montesinos, to fine-tuning plans for the self-coup that would finally be executed in 1992.<sup>33</sup>

Montesinos' next step in consolidating power was to neutralize those elements in the army which had thwarted his ambitions in the past. The best instrument for controlling the army was the intelligence services — which he promptly upgraded. Their growth was largely inward, as increased resources were allocated for spying on army officers. Under the heavy hand of new army intelligence chief and Montesinos artillery buddy, Col. Alberto Pinto Cárdenas, intimidation reached previously unknown proportions.

Some tried to forestall Montesinos' influence. Vice-president and president of the Senate San Román warned Fujimori "to get rid of that character," that the relationship could be harmful to him.

But although Fujimori refused to dismiss Montesinos, he tried to keep their dealings semi-clandestine. This secrecy gave Fujimori (and, as it would turn out, also gave the CIA) a certain level of plausible deniability. And Montesinos turned secrecy into a source of strength: He literally became a man of the shadows; he could touch almost anyone from there, but no one could touch him.

Late at night, he would go straight to Fujimori's bedroom at the presidential palace. The president's military aides would see Montesinos, usually dressed in an overcoat — uncommon in Lima — going through the metal doors which Fujimori had installed in his private quarters. There, Fuji-

mori's paranoia would be deliciously thrilled and policy would be made.

From September to October 1990, Montesinos sat in on most meetings between the minister of defense and the joint chiefs of staff as Fujimori's personal representative. After a couple of unsubtle messages, the commanders-in-chief would patiently wait for the "doctor," and then stand as he entered the room.

Gen. Díaz, realizing too late he had been used, was prodded to resign. His replacement, Brigadier Gen. Julio Salazar Monroe, who had managed to stay in active service despite consistently substandard performance, was the perfect straw man: He was clever enough to understand he was just a figurehead, yet not bright enough to get bored and quit. Montesinos' two closest associates at the time were Rafael Merino, the brains; and Pinto Cárdenas, the fangs.

By the end of 1990, no one dared openly contest Montesinos' authority in the armed forces or even less so in the police. Both he and Fujimori played the deniability game. Up to June 1991, Fujimori said that Montesinos was simply his lawyer, not a government official.<sup>34</sup> Only in March 1992, after continuous grilling by the media, did he have to admit that Montesinos worked for SIN.<sup>35</sup>

### Strengthening Links With the CIA

As Montesinos reinforced his position, he also strengthened his relationship with the CIA. This link solidified the CIA's comeback in Peru. After Velasco had expelled the U.S. Military Mission and cut off the CIA's local antennae in the late 1960s, the Company's contacts with the Peruvian security forces were considerably weakened. Paradoxically, it was during the rhetorically anti-American Alan García regime that ties tightened again. García's right-hand man, Agustín Mantilla, forged close working relations with the Agency, and was a guest at their Langley headquarters.<sup>36</sup>

Now in prison (he was arrested in the April 5 coup), Mantilla admitted that he had been aware of an intense relationship between Montesinos and the CIA, "from the very beginning of Fujimori's regime, and even before. [Montesinos] regularly saw the chief of station in Lima, but he was also invited to CIA's headquarters, and he was in Langley at that time. Let's say that I am aware of an intimate relationship since 1990."<sup>37</sup>

Many at the U.S. Embassy, especially those connected with the drug war, were unhappy over that collaboration and distanced themselves off-the-record: "If a person offers you information, you always take it, no matter how disreputable the source. And if people offer you information which consistently turns out to be true, you take it consistently. ... [Montesinos] has insisted on talking only with one man, and he sees him sometimes two weeks apart." That man was the station chief in Lima, who, in the words of another U.S.

34. *Caretas*, No. 1165, April 26, 1991.

35. Interview with *La República* (Lima), March 2, 1992.

36. Interview with Mantilla, November 18, 1991.

37. *Ibid.*, early 1992.

33. Military sources, 1991, 1992.

diplomat was “bamboozled by Montesinos.”<sup>38</sup> At any rate, by 1990, Montesinos, for all his drug and human rights baggage, was a prized and protected asset of the CIA.

By April 1991, because of that protection, he felt secure enough to move in and take control of the Peruvian side of the drug war. It was a classic case of the fox guarding the hen house; but secrecy and the CIA’s help silenced objections.

Montesinos used his position to push the Lima office of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) from its lead role and to replace it with the CIA. Since 1985, when the DEA had supplied important information to Gen. Chávez on the Rodríguez López drug organization which Montesinos was then defending, the ex-drug lawyer had feared and loathed the DEA. Right on cue, in 1991, Fujimori publicly attacked the DEA, first in the Upper Huallaga, and then at the San Antonio presidential drug summit.

In September 1991, Montesinos had commandeered almost all the Peruvian side of the U.S.-Peru joint anti-drug programs. That month — in a shocking surprise to the DEA and the State Department’s Narcotics Assistance Unit (NAU) — a SIN “anti-drug” arm was created and became an independent directorate. “The outfit’s creation wasn’t even discussed, much less decided in Peru. It was decided in Washington through inter-agency meetings, in which the State Department’s voice apparently didn’t count much,” says a former Lima-based drug warrior.<sup>39</sup>

Some DEA and NAU personnel were enraged. Aside from issues of turf, the idea of Montesinos in charge of the Peruvian side of the drug war was a macabre irony. Many with long experience and good intelligence sources in Lima feared a sickening replay of the Noriega story. They held informal meetings and drafted a cable. It was never sent. “Where is the proof?” they were asked. “You know what they mean here by proof,” says the same source, “a smoking gun.”<sup>40</sup>

### **The Fox Gets Control of the Chicken Coop**

When some DEA agents tried to probe deeper into Montesinos’ ties with traffickers, they ran into a bureaucratic stone wall. A frustrated embassy official explained U.S. government reluctance to examine Montesinos’ connections with drug traffickers: “If you have a son, are you going to be looking for his defects?”<sup>41</sup>

This disingenuousness was replicated in Washington. On June 18, 1992, Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) wrote to Assistant Secretary of State for Hemispheric Affairs Bernard Aronson: “What has Montesinos’ relationship been to the U.S.

intelligence community, and are we not running the same risk with him — in terms of the seriousness of our commitment in anti-narcotics activities — that we ran with Reagan-era pal Manuel Noriega?” The answer, signed on August 7 by Janet G. Mullins, then in charge of Legislative Affairs, was evasive. “We do not have regular diplomatic contact with [Montesinos] and are therefore limited in what we can say. There are reports that he wields great influence with President Fujimori and with the Peruvian military. Others dispute these reports.”

A U.S. congressional source who investigated the matter concluded that the CIA “has a relationship with him. He is a very valuable asset. ... This should be of great concern to us.”<sup>42</sup>

The new anti-drug outfit did not, of course, catch traffickers or cocaine. Its members, trained and equipped by the CIA,

were used for many other purposes, such as routine human rights violations and the overthrow of democracy in the April 5 coup. In the end, the unit functioned much as a similar

one did in Haiti — where intelligence service anti-drug units formed and trained by the CIA ended up cosponsoring the coup that overthrew Aristide; and another in Venezuela — where intelligence units trafficked drugs on their own account.

### **Trying to Tame the Courts and Media**

As Montesinos consolidated his hold on power, the threat of media exposure constrained his ability to act. Reporting by *Caretas* was particularly worrisome.

Through telephone wiretapping and spying, Montesinos discovered that the magazine’s editor, Enrique Zileri, was working on another exposé.<sup>43</sup> On June 6, 1991, Montesinos sent one of his associates, former journalist Víctor Riveros, to offer a deal in his name: He would feed Zileri a steady flow of first-rate intelligence, and in return, *Caretas* would not touch Montesinos.

When Zileri turned the deal down, Montesinos launched a lawsuit charging that the magazine had terribly offended him by nicknaming him “Rasputin.” This was the second lawsuit that Montesinos brought against *Caretas*.<sup>44</sup> Despite the flimsiness of the charges and *Caretas*’ extensive evidence, Montesinos now had control of the courts and was able to easily win the case. After the self-coup, those judges supportive of Montesinos were rewarded; the few who had

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*A U.S. congressional source concluded that the CIA  
“has a relationship with [Montesinos]. He is a very  
valuable asset. ... This should be of great concern to us.”*

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38. Interviews with Western diplomats, 1992.

39. Interview, 1992.

40. Interview, 1992.

41. Interview, 1992.

42. U.S. congressional source, October 1992.

43. It was routine for government intelligence agencies to tap those investigating them. SIN sources, in interviews, both with the author and with two foreign journalists, revealed specific knowledge of the contents of private telephone calls made by *Caretas* staff members.

44. The first suit Montesinos filed against *Caretas* in October 1986 charged the magazine with libel. *Caretas* had graphically exposed Montesinos’ role as legal strategist for the Rodríguez López drug organization. Montesinos lost the case.



remained independent were purged. Ombudsman Guillermo Cabala told Sam Dillon, then with the *Miami Herald*, that Montesinos had fired him out of "personal vengeance. After this purge, the judiciary is going to be completely submissive to the executive, and by that I mean Vladimiro Montesinos," Cabala said.<sup>45</sup>

Montesinos' judicial victory against *Caretas* boosted his intimidation capability enormously. As author Rebecca West wrote in *The New Meaning of Treason*: "The traitor can change the community into a desert haunted by fear ...,"<sup>46</sup> and fear was Montesinos' currency. With it he had bought direct control of the national and army intelligence services, complete with their dirty tricks and assassination teams.

### A Desert Haunted by Fear

It was a resource he did not shrink from using. On the night of November 3, 1991, a group of men armed with silencer-equipped submachine guns broke into a "pollada," a chicken barbecue in the Barrios Altos district, a poor, crowded neighborhood in central Lima. Although they were less than 30 meters from the police intelligence directorate's headquarters and no more than 50 meters from another police precinct, the hooded men parked their four-wheel vehicles just outside the entrance and burst into the grim multi-family building. They rounded up everyone—the light of soul, the drunk, the stunned children—had some lie on the floor, almost on top of each other, and began shooting at the mass of human flesh. Counterpoint to the blasting music, one survivor remembered the silenced shots sounding "like popcorn." In less than a minute, 15 people, including an eight-year-old child, had been killed in the small room. Four survived with critical wounds.<sup>47</sup> What remained is what you have after people are massacred in small places. Blood reaches far and high, slaughterhouse smells remain for days, bodies seem compressed one against the other.

Despite a half-hearted effort to pin blame on the Shining Path, the signatures were clear. The house had been under army intelligence surveillance since early that year. The killers all used the army's assassination weapon of choice, a silencer-equipped H & K submachine gun. They disregarded the close proximity of the police. (In fact, a troop transport, filled with soldiers, drove in front of the two police units as the assassination was taking place and left the area immediately afterwards.) And finally, the death-squad vehicles had license plates. Somebody jotted down the numbers: One was assigned to the office of Santiago Fujimori, the president's brother; the other to the office of David Mejía, the vice-minister of the interior. The police reported that the vehicles had been stolen.<sup>48</sup>

The massacre was as brutally inept as the one at Cayara, only this one happened in central Lima. The outraged con-

gress appointed a commission of inquiry, but as the prosecutor Pablo Livia was preparing to do ballistic tests with weapons belonging to army intelligence, he was taken off the case and purged after the April 5 coup.

### Crossing the Rubicon

Why the massacre? That two or three people at the barbecue were believed to be Shining Path sympathizers, and the penchant for brutality shared by Pinto Cárdenas and Montesinos could have provided enough justification. It is also possible that the killing was a bridge-burning operation to push the doubtful or reluctant within Fujimori's entourage down the road to a coup d'état.

Many members of Fujimori's entourage had come to realize that they had much to lose under a law-abiding, democratic regime. The only way to guarantee impunity was to complete the plunge into illegality.

In the months that followed, several reliable military sources leaked names of the death-squad members and details of the action.<sup>49</sup> In late 1992, Vice President Máximo San Román distributed intelligence notes clandestinely sent to him by dissident agents. The papers described in detail how the massacre had been planned and executed; they pointed to Montesinos as ordering the operation. One week later, *Si* newsweekly ran a story, based on confidential sources, which identified the participants and the chain of command—all the way to Montesinos.

After his self-coup, on receiving a request from figurehead SIN Director Julio Salazar, Fujimori promoted all the officers who had been identified as participants in the mass-murder.

With the "pollada" affair setting the public agenda, Montesinos and Fujimori secretly concentrated on planning the self-coup. It is now clear that, by early 1990, one of the things they had agreed on was the eventual overthrow of democracy. As the *Peru Report*, with well-placed sources in Peru's intelligence establishment, wrote soon after the April coup, "the coup structure was also in place almost from the start of Mr. Fujimori's period in July 1990...."<sup>50</sup> The objective of the coup was to seize dictatorial power and discard laws that restricted him under democratic procedure.

Only Montesinos, Fujimori, and their most immediate accomplices—Peru's real chain of command—were in the know. General Valdivia, for whom toppling democracy meant impunity for the Cayara massacre, was in charge of the military side. The air force and navy commanders-in-chief were kept in the dark until the eve of the coup. According to most sources, the self-coup had been planned for 1993, but a number of factors pushed up the schedule. Most problematic was the increasingly assertive parliament, which had, for instance, rejected the promotion of two close Montesinos associates, Brig. Gen. Julio Salazar Monroe and Col. Enrique Causso.

45. Sam Dillon, "Peru's Advisor Linked to Drug Cartels," *Miami Herald*, April 18, 1992.

46. Rebecca West, *The New Meaning of Treason* (New York: Viking, 1964).

47. Americas Watch, *Peru: Civil Society and Democracy Under Fire*, August 1992, pp. 20-22.

48. Americas Watch, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

49. Interviews, January to June 1992. One of the assassins was wounded from a ricochet and later had to hide from his nervous former comrades when it was discovered that he had been the bodyguard of a purged general.

50. *Peru Report* (Lima), April-May 1992.

At any rate, by late March, Fujimori was sleeping less at the government palace, and more at army headquarters, where his closest companions were Montesinos, Pinto Cárdenas, and Valdivia. There, they prepared the coup.

On April 5, 1992, General Valdivia, closely watched by Pinto Cárdenas, executed the successful coup. Democracy and the rule of law were finally overthrown after 12 immensely difficult years, betrayed from the inside. Dozens of people, including the author, who had criticized the government, were rounded up during the window of impunity which the early hours of a coup usually open. In some cases, such as those of former President Alan García (who managed to escape) and former Interior Minister Agustín Mantilla, the government tried to use those arrests to rouse popular support and justify the coup. In other instances, the arrests were naked examples of a gangster regime in action, bent on revenge. When Montesinos and Fujimori arrested this writer, they miscalculated; they had not foreseen the strong international protest which forced my release.

They also misjudged the integrity of some. Vice President San Román denounced the coup, broke with Fujimori, and was proclaimed the legitimate president of Peru by the dissolved parliament, assembled for the occasion. The nomination had only moral value, but it demanded no small amount of courage. A month later, interviewed by an Organization of American States (OAS) mission in Lima to negotiate a way out of the coup, San Román warned that if a return to democracy was not accomplished soon, the country would be handed over to drug traffickers. Any dialogue with Fujimori had only one condition: Montesinos' dismissal. "He is the president in the shadows," San Román told the mission. "The true ruler of Peru is Montesinos, and Fujimori is only a facade."<sup>51</sup>

Retired army general, Sinesio Jarama, expressed the same point with soldierly directness, "I think that Montesinos ... finally found his puppet."<sup>52</sup>

### The Oblivion Commandos

Puppeteer or ventriloquist, there he was, Montesinos, the paradigmatic pariah, finally in the center of power, unhampered by accountability. It had been a long road to power, and now power was needed to erase the path — dirty and dangerous with the traces of old crimes. So the first post-coup operatives were directed to unleash amnesia.

Between April 5 and 10, while Fujimori continued to insist he had carried out the coup to end economic recession, fight drugs, and defeat the Shining Path, scores of uniformed soldiers and plainclothes military intelligence agents did the

real work. By night, they entered the offices and central archives of the Palacio de Justicia, Peru's judiciary center, and the *Fiscalía de la Nación*, the attorney general's building.

Soon, the buildings echoed with the dull thud of weighty files thrown from shelves and drawers. The oblivion commandos worked through two days and nights. In order to save themselves the bother of carrying the documents down narrow flights of stairs, soldiers and spies threw the papers from a balcony into military pick-up trucks parked below. When the sacking ended—and before the judicial purge began—one-third of the nearly 30,000 files of active judicial cases in Peru had been removed. The buildings remained empty for days, surrounded by a ring of soldiers.

Gone were hundreds of files useful for blackmail or slander; gone were files concerning lawsuits around Fujimori and his family; and gone were all the files, not previously removed, on Montesinos. This paper purge was, in fact, one of the

main reasons for the coup — a coverup coup, where not only bothersome individuals, but history itself was purged.

A few days later, a more relaxed Fujimori sat at a military headquarters watching TV. On the screen was his new spokesman, Foreign Minister Augusto Blacker, an ambitious economist whose servility would soon be repaid with dismissal from the cabinet. He was explaining to the foreign press that the "government of emergency and national reconstruction" would last in its extra-constitutional role for "18 to 20 months." Fujimori smirked and turned to people surrounding him, among them Montesinos' close associate, Rafael Merino, "He must have meant 18 years, not 18 months!"<sup>53</sup>

Some weeks later, as Fujimori was lulling the OAS general assembly with promises of a prompt return to democracy, military intelligence agents were busily distributing a leaflet in Lima: Under a picture of the dictator, the title said it all: "Fujimori: President for life of Peru."

The folded leaflet, signed by an ad-hoc "New Dawn Movement," was as close as Montesinos ever came to delivering his own political manifesto.

So, [Fujimori] used force and this is supposedly an evil thing because it is illegal? What did they want! ... Is it not true that in the origin of all modern states, might always preceded right? Political freedom is only a relative idea. ... With an audacious coup, Pisistratus took the citadel and prepared Pericles's century. Brutus violated the constitution, expelled the Tarquin, and founded, through knifings, a republic whose greatness is the most magnificent spectacle ever witnessed in the universe. ... When did the king-

51. Interview with San Román, May 5, 1992.

52. Interview with Jarama, July 7, 1992.

53. *Peru Report*, April-May 1992.



doms of Spain, France, and Germany become powerful? Wasn't it with the likes of Leon I, Jules II, Philip II, Louis XIV, Napoleon? Men all with a terrible fist, leaning more on their swords' pommels than on their countries' constitutions ... and if we need contemporary examples, we'll find plenty of them: Spain, Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, Chile, etc. They are now happy and prosperous democracies, only thanks to previous authoritarian regimes.

To graft that happiness to Peru's future, it continued, we need "to centralize authority and command, but mostly, we need a continuity in power, or, what is the same, a president for life."

### To the Victor

All that was left was for Montesinos to savor in public the fruits of the victory he had engineered, by necessity, in secret. The moment came some weeks into the dictatorship. Brushing aside the rejection of the already closed legislature, Fujimori promoted Salazar Monroe to full general and Colonel Causso to brigadier general. After the open ceremony at army headquarters, all the generals, one by one, walked the line to where Montesinos, the only man in civilian clothes, stood, and paid their respects to the man who counted, the godfather. This was victory.

A few still resisted and spoke out—from *Caretas* and other magazines, to the main political parties, to Máximo San Román, who reiterated his worry "that the country is falling into the hands of a Mafia." But acknowledgment of Montesinos' influence ran beyond the fawning line of generals at the ceremony. Former enemies who had spoken openly against him would now become wet with fright if he, or Pinto, or even Merino addressed a pointed, or passing, remark mentioning them, their property, their families. All the generals now had to hide their terror behind enthusiastic allegiance and servile obeisance. As Sir John Harrington wrote long ago:

*Treason doth never prosper: what's the reason?  
For if it prosper, none dare call it treason.*

The U.S. administration, initially flustered, shrugged off the violation of democracy with mumblings about realpolitik and legitimized the coup. Fujimori was the name of the game, the only game in town, the same old "our son-of-a-bitch" game.

### Montesinos Publicly Linked to Human Rights Crimes

Even then, at the beginning of 1993, Vladimiro Montesinos' name and the extent of his power, however shadowy, were open secrets. Then in April and May, two extraordinary revelations surrounding yet another horrific human rights violation forced them irrevocably into the public glare. On July 18, 1992, a professor and nine students from the Enrique Guzmán y Valle teachers' college (*La Cantuta*) had been abducted by armed men and never again seen alive. Although pressure from press, human rights groups, and family members kept the case itself from dying, it languished with hundreds of other human rights violations in a purgatory of official denials and neglect.

Then, at the beginning of April 1993, Henry Pease, an opposition congressman, read a document signed "Sleeping Lion." Members of this clandestine group of active duty officers were disgusted by the politics of disappearance and assassination. They detailed the crime of *La Cantuta*: The *Colina* death squad kidnapped the ten, murdered them, and then hurriedly buried, disinterred, and reburied the bodies. The document named the death squad members, beginning with its operational chief, Major Santiago Martín Rivas, and revealed that it operated under orders from the de facto head of the National Intelligence Service, Vladimiro Montesinos, and army chief Hermoza. According to "Sleeping Lion," the *Colina* group had carried out various other murders in addition to those at *La Cantuta*, including the November 1991 urban massacre at the barbecue in the Barrios Altos section of Lima.<sup>54</sup> (This crime had also been independently linked back to Montesinos almost from the moment it took place.)

The painstakingly detailed "Sleeping Lion" document forced the constituent assembly to create an investigative commission. After testifying before it on April 20, 1993, Gen. Hermoza verbally attacked the opposition members on the commission and accused them of collusion with terrorism. The next day, tank units began parading through the streets of Lima in an open demonstration of power. The assembly backed off.

It was into this tinderbox of repression and fear that Gen. Rodolfo Robles — a man who clearly had privileged access to information — threw a lighted torch. On May 6, 1993, the well-respected commander of the army's academic centers, the third man from the top of the Peruvian army hierarchy, made a gesture without precedent in the history of his institution. As he was about to be kicked upstairs to the institutional oblivion of a Washington posting and his sons transferred to the guerrilla zones, Robles went to the U.S. Embassy, where he was joined by his family, and asked for asylum.

At a hastily called news conference, his wife read an eight-page handwritten letter from her husband which expressed the profound emotion of a decision made at high personal cost. The general, it announced, was leaving "the institution to which I have dedicated 37 years of my life, from the age of 16," in order to denounce

an intolerable degradation for a soldier and for a man, which is related to the systematic violation of the human rights of the Peruvian population on the part of a group of thugs who, under the orders of the ex-army captain Vladimiro Montesinos Montesinos [sic] and the servile approval of EP [Peruvian Army] General Nicolás de Bari Hermoza Rios, the unworthy commanding general of the EP, are committing crimes that are unjustly smearing all of the glorious Peruvian army.

[I] denounce the following before my people: The crime of *La Cantuta*, in which a professor and ten [sic] students

54. *Caretas*, No. 1254, April 7, 1993; also "Sleeping Lion," document.

of this university were victimized, was committed by a special intelligence detachment that operates under the direct orders of the presidential advisor and virtual chief of the SIN, Vladimiro Montesinos Montesinos [sic], and whose activity is coordinated with the Army Intelligence Service (SIE) and with the Intelligence Directorate (DINTE) of the army, but is approved and always known by the commanding general of the army.

A few weeks later, from his exile in Buenos Aires, Robles added, surprisingly, the name of his principal source: Gen. Willy Chirinos, who, for a short time some weeks after the *La Cantuta* kidnapping, had been the director of army intelligence. According to Robles, Chirinos had tried to deactivate the *Colinas* death squad, but was first thwarted and then fired by Montesinos.<sup>55</sup>

The effect of his asylum request and denunciations was explosive. With this act of defiance, Robles transformed a grimly routine disappearance case into what Americas Watch Investigator for the Andean Region, Robin Kirk, called, "the most important human rights case" since the beginning of the internal war in Peru in 1980, "not because of the number of corpses or the gravity of the affair, but because it is the case where the relationship to the executive is the clearest. ... In the other cases, they came to [identify the responsibility] of the commanding officer. In *La Cantuta*, it was politics at the highest level."<sup>56</sup>

### Digging Up the Evidence

Still the Fujimori administration stonewalled. On July 8, 1993, however, almost a year after the kidnappings, and three months after Robles' denunciation, the independent magazine *Si* received a map pinpointing a clandestine grave in the Cieneguilla district adjacent to Lima, allegedly containing the remains of some of the victims of *La Cantuta*.

Now the coverup began in earnest. Refusing to investigate, Fujimori-appointee, Attorney General Blanca Nélida Colán, threatened the editor of *Si* with prosecution. At the same time, the anti-terrorist police produced detainees who, it claimed, were Shining Path members who had delivered the map to *Si* as part of an elaborate propaganda hoax. (The man charged with concocting the map was held for a year despite a complete lack of evidence. Eventually the regime was forced to release him, but not to acknowledge the injustice.)

But in the end, the dead spoke. In the common grave at Cieneguilla — among the half-burned human remains — was a key chain with four keys. Raida Cóndor, mother of Armando, one of the disappeared students, recognized it as her son's.

Rumors were rife that the police and justice officials would attempt to alter the keys, despite their having been photographed by the press. Finally, growing national and international pressure forced the justice official in charge of

the case to test the keys. They fit and also unlocked the door to the coverup.

In a relatively short time, other graves containing the remains of the disappeared were discovered. Fujimori announced in an interview with the *New York Times* that some army officers were under arrest. Then, in a hurried process with a military tribunal, the death squad members were sentenced to various prison terms.<sup>57</sup> The army itself, however, continued day by day to centralize under Hermoza's command,<sup>58</sup> and the intelligence services remained under the control of the now very notorious but still unofficial Vladimiro Montesinos.

### The Future of Democracy

The climate of intimidation has begun to lose its oppressive capacity. In October 1993, a constitutional referendum organized by Fujimori to legitimize his regime ended with the democratic opposition gaining a healthy 47 percent of the vote.

Since then, the independent press has continued to reinvigorate itself and Fujimori's position has been further eroded. Even surveys conducted by pollsters close to the regime now give a clear lead to a man who, at this point, looks likely to become the opposition candidate—former U.N. Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. International pressure has forced the regime to back down from its previous hardline agenda and assume the unconvincing image of a kinder, gentler Fujimori.

Montesinos himself has had some failures to lament. He tried to steal credit for the capture of the Shining Path leader Abimael Guzmán. In fact, the anti-terrorist police, commanded by Gen. Antonio Ketín Vidal, tracked down and arrested the elusive guerrilla leader. After Ketín informed the press of this feat, Montesinos was so furious, he promptly engineered Ketín's removal.

Then, Montesinos' plan to pull a psywar victory backfired. He met often with Guzmán in his cell and persuaded him, by means unknown, to write letters to Fujimori asking for peace negotiations. The first two letters were timed for release just before the October 1993 referendum on the constitution. The move turned out to be totally counterproductive for Fujimori. It not only helped the opposition, but also harmed the army's counterinsurgency strategy. Guzmán's call for negotiations was seen as capitulation. It distanced him from the largely reorganized Shining Path leadership and energized the guerrilla attacks.

Fiascos and setbacks aside, both Fujimori and Montesinos are still firmly entrenched. It remains to be seen whether, if Fujimori is defeated at the 1995 election, they will surrender power peaceably. If history is any guide, there is reason for worry. Fujimori and his Svengali might once again trample legality and democracy as they did in 1992. •

55. *Caretas*, No. 1263, May 27, 1993.

56. Interview with Robin Kirk, July 1993.

57. The army tribunal explicitly exonerated both the army and intelligence chiefs, that is, Hermoza and Montesinos.

58. By this time, Montesinos had betrayed Gen. Valdivia in favor of Hermoza, dumped Denegri, and replaced Pinto Cárdenas.



(*Turabi, continued from p. 19*)

— including instigation of communal violence against Coptic Christians in Upper Egypt — arise out of local dissatisfaction, which is then eagerly fomented by the Brothers.

Arms flows from Afghanistan are increasingly central to the Muslim Brothers' military aspirations in Sudan. Reports indicate that four planeloads of weapons arrived in Khartoum from Kabul in August and September 1993.<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, the major strand of the Brothers' foreign policy remains a civilian strategy — taking over civil institutions and using the electoral process. Violence is a minor but fast-growing component, especially since the cancellation of the 1992 Algerian elections.

Afghanistan brought a wealth not only of men and arms, but also of cash to Islamic movements. Money flowed from Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the U.S. — from smuggling heroin and arms as well as from humanitarian ventures. Some of this money poured into the coffers of the Muslim Brothers. It expanded the Islamic African Relief Association Turabi had encouraged during his exile in Saudi Arabia into a worldwide, broadly defined Islamic Relief Association. The change in name reflected the organization's expanded expectations and prospects.

Finally, Afghanistan brought together the two wings of political Islam which had formerly been bitterly at odds: the Arab-Sunni Muslim Brothers and the Shia movements in Iran and Central Asia. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the Muslim Brothers had been an almost exclusively Arab movement. At the start of the Iran-Iraq war, out of a combination of Arabism, dislike for the Ayatollah Khomeini, and opportunism, they had backed Iraq. Gradually and secretly, they warmed to Iran and began sending people there for training as security officers. Nimeiri, on the other hand, openly backed Iraq and even sent combatants in 1982 to the Iran-Iraq war. A decade later, Sudan under el Bashir had also switched sides—to the same side Turabi had long backed. Iran became Sudan's closest ally and the rapidly expanding ties between the Muslim Brothers and Iran finally became public. Today, Turabi no longer contrasts himself with the ayatollahs. Common cause in Afghanistan was the link.

### **The End of the Cold War, the Purse Closes**

Another thing Afghanistan changed was the course of the Cold War. The Soviet defeat in that struggle contributed to the dissolution of the only superpower able to rival the U.S. With the end of the Cold War, Sudan lost its leverage. For years, U.S. money had enabled successive Sudanese governments to fight a civil war and grease the wheels of a corrupt and patrimonial regime.

23. *Sudan Democratic Gazette*, October 1993, p. 6.

It must have seemed that the aid supply was endless. Even when Nimeiri's relationship with the U.S. and the IMF began to deteriorate in 1983 after he imposed Islamic economics, there was no serious threat that funds would be cut off. The U.S. and U.S.-dominated IMF threatened, bullied, and occasionally slapped Sudan's wrist, but they continued to pour money into the hole of corrupt governance, poorly planned development projects, and military buildup. As long as the Cold War lasted, Sudan held a hand with two aces. The first was strategic importance. The second was, ironically, Sudan's IMF arrears itself. At \$250 million, it was the world's largest, and formal default would set a dangerous international precedent. So, while the IMF formally suspended Sudan in February 1986, it also did all it could to prevent default. Although it neither paid its debts nor satisfied the IMF's demand for reforms, Sudan continued to receive about \$800 million in international aid per year.<sup>24</sup> Understandably, neither Sudan nor the IMF advertised the fact that Sudan had successfully called the bluff of the international financial system.

Then, the unimaginable happened and Sudan's hand became virtually worthless. In 1989, the Cold War fizzled. Bush's Secretary of State James Baker, deeply frustrated with Sudan's financial shenanigans, upped the stakes and called the game. Days after his appointment, he issued an unprecedented condemnation

of the Sudanese government, accusing the Mahdi government of using starvation as a weapon of war. This hardline approach yielded immediate results. Negotiations for "Operation Lifeline Sudan" to provide relief to the South and a ceasefire in the war followed within weeks.

Baker gave Treasury and the IMF the green light to insist on truly tough conditions for further aid. IMF-Sudan negotiations broke down in April 1989 when the government refused to lift a subsidy on wheat. As food shortages in urban areas became serious and discontent grew, Baker's staff intimated that the U.S. would not support the Mahdi government against a military coup.<sup>25</sup>

On June 30, Brigadier Omer Hassan Ahmed al Bashir plucked himself from obscurity, overthrew Mahdi, and assumed the presidency. Before 1989, al Bashir was known chiefly for his asceticism and his involvement in the civil war. Not a Muslim Brother himself, he belongs to a wider circle of fellow travelers who see mutual advantage in a close working relationship.

Al Bashir scrambled to placate Washington. He quickly appointed two men with close links to the CIA to top security

24. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Geographical Breakdown of Financial Flows to Developing Countries* (Paris: OECD, 1991).  
25. "Officials: US may welcome coup in Sudan," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, January 27, 1989.

posts — Hamad el Murtada Mamoun, widely believed to be on the CIA payroll, and Col. El Fatih Erwa. When Nimeiri was overthrown, Erwa escaped prosecution by testifying against his former boss. In 1986, when Nimeiri fell, Erwa returned to Sudan and resumed his former position as chief of external security for the Horn of Africa. At this stage, Cold War dynamics still held and Washington retained its interest in the Ethiopian war. Erwa's reinstatement as link-man between the U.S. and the Ethiopian and Eritrean rebel fronts ensured that Sudan would continue to support Ethiopia's well-established rebel fronts, not its more marginal and volatile Islamic rebels.<sup>26</sup> Confident that its interests were being looked after, the U.S. gave about \$1.5 million in aid to the Sudanese army under the International Military Education and Training program in 1990 and 1991.<sup>27</sup> One of the program's stated aims is to expose the officer corps to "U.S. values including human rights."

Ironically, Al Bashir finally imposed some IMF austerity measures his predecessors had so long resisted — not to reassure the West, but to help the Muslim Brothers. They were able to buy up denationalized companies at bargain basement prices. This move also encouraged the World Bank and IMF officials to open negotiations with Sudan.

### Supporting Terrorism

The end of the Cold War had rendered Sudan irrelevant; its strategic importance vis-à-vis Ethiopia and Libya was now marginal. The 1991 defeat of Mengistu gave the State Department its long sought-after prize in the Horn: Ethiopia. The threat from Qaddafi was also in decline. Not surprisingly, at the same time, U.S. interest in Sudanese security evaporated and Washington cut off aid — invoking the Brooke Amendment and Section 513 of the Foreign Assistance Act, which prohibits aid to military governments that overthrow elected ones. Under strategically favorable circumstances, the State Department would have circumvented the restriction; in this case, it did not. International aid was also scaled down, and the IMF refused to revoke Sudan's suspension.

Sudan's support for Iraq in the Gulf War was the final straw, causing relations to be effectively severed. The Muslim Brothers supported Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, despite the mistreatment of its organization at the hands of the Baathists. Pragmatic as always, they hoped that the Gulf monarchies would be destabilized and that radical Islamic governments would replace them. The policy exacerbated Sudan's economic crisis — panic spread that lucrative remittances by Sudanese workers in Saudi Arabia would be cut off — but served the Muslim Brothers' strategic aims.

Sudan's support for Iraq also coincided with the January 1991 decision by the Sudanese courts to release two Palestinians caught red-handed in a 1988 Khartoum hotel bombing

that killed a British family and a British teacher. The courts released the two on the grounds that theirs was a "political act." This decision provided the first example of Khartoum's support for terrorism.

### The Clinton Administration

Although Sudan's position as pariah state was confirmed, several years passed before the international community took decisive action. In December 1993, after rewriting its constitution to protect itself from the threat of defaulters, the IMF, in an unprecedented move, suspended Sudan's voting rights at the Fund, in effect canceling its membership. The European Community imposed an arms embargo, and various humanitarian and religious groups lobbied Clinton to press for a U.N. fuel embargo, a no-fly zone, and other sanctions.<sup>28</sup>

There is some evidence that Clinton is considering taking action on these or other sanctions. Recently, the U.S. has ratcheted up its opposition to Khartoum and begun to side with the South against al Bashir's Islamic North. Throughout the Cold War, the official U.S. position was that the SPLA rebel army was simply a communist organization set up by the Eastern bloc to destabilize a pro-Western Sudan. This, despite overwhelming evidence that the main cause of the fighting was Southern resentment at Northern domination. Recently, however, Washington has been working to unify competing SPLA factions and appears content to see its humanitarian food aid diverted to the southern rebels. There are signs it is looking for any excuse to provide more substantial assistance.

But the harshest measure applied so far against Sudan has been the U.S. declaration that it is responsible for sponsoring international terrorism. Under the circumstances, this declaration has more than a trace of irony. Not only is exporting terrorism the least of the Sudan government's crimes, but it is only a marginal element in the Muslim Brothers' strategy for promoting political Islam. Most ironic of all, the United States itself has, over the years, sometimes deliberately and sometimes unwittingly, sponsored exactly those people whom it now condemns as terrorists.

Although his country is bankrupt, internationally isolated, enmeshed in civil war and raked by famine, Turabi and the Muslim Brothers are doing quite well. They remain in power without any obvious opposition in sight; they prosper commercially and their movement is on the advance throughout the Arab world.

Declaring Sudan a terrorist state formalizes its hostile relationship with the West; it is a propaganda tool for the government and a rallying cry for mobilizing the people. For the U.S., it masks the total failure to come up with any strategy to deal with the threat posed by Islamic absolutism. And the U.S. government once again finds itself retreating without a map through a minefield that it sowed itself. •

26. In 1990, one American diplomat described the ambassador in Khartoum as "ambassador to the EPLF [Eritrean People's Liberation Front]" in conversation with the author.

27. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*

28. A March 23, 1994 letter to President Clinton from the Washington, D.C.-based Coalition for Peace in the Horn of Africa, signed by 28 non-governmental organizations.



(*Gladio*, continued from p. 27)

Mafia, Washington had the perfect apparatus for doing such a deed without leaving a trace.

### Penetrating the Red Brigades

That the Red Brigades had been thoroughly infiltrated for years by both the CIA and the Italian secret services is no longer contested. The purpose of the operation was to encourage violence from extremist sectors of the left in order to discredit the left as a whole. The Red Brigades were a perfect foil. With unflinching radicalism, they considered the Italian Communist Party too moderate and Moro's opening too compromising.

The Red Brigades worked closely with the Hyperion Language School in Paris, with some members not realizing it had CIA ties. The school had been founded by three pseudo-revolutionary Italians, one of whom, Corrado Simioni, had worked for the CIA at Radio Free Europe.<sup>58</sup> Another, Duccio Berio, has admitted passing information about Italian leftist groups to SID.<sup>59</sup> Hyperion opened an office in Italy shortly before the kidnapping and closed it a few months later. An Italian police report said Hyperion may be "the most important CIA office in Europe."<sup>60</sup> Mario Moretti, one of those who handled arms deals and the Paris connection for the Red Brigades, managed to avoid arrest in the Moro case for three years even though he personally handled the kidnapping.<sup>61</sup>

Venice magistrate Carlo Mastelloni concluded in 1984 that the Red Brigades had for years received arms from the PLO.<sup>62</sup> Mastelloni wrote that "the de facto secret service level accord between the USA and the PLO was considered relevant to the present investigation into the ... relationship between the Red Brigades organization and the PLO."<sup>63</sup> One *Gladio* scholar, Phillip Willan, concludes that "the arms deal between the PLO and the Red Brigades formed part of the secret accord between the PLO and the CIA."<sup>64</sup> His research indicates that the alleged deal between the CIA and the PLO occurred in 1976, a year after the U.S. promised Israel that it would have no political contacts with the PLO.

At the time of the Moro kidnapping, several leaders of the Brigades were in prison, having been turned in by a double agent after they kidnapped a judge. According to journalist Gianni Cipriani, one of those arrested was carrying phone numbers and personal notes leading to a high official of SID, who had boasted openly of having agents inside the Red Brigades. Other intriguing finds included the discovery in the Brigade offices of a printing press which had previously belonged to SID and ballistics tests showing more than half of the 92 bullets at the kidnapping scene were similar to those in *Gladio* stocks.<sup>65</sup>

Several people have noted the unlikelihood of the Red Brigades pulling off such a smooth, military-style kidnapping in the center of Rome. Alberto Franceschini, a jailed member of the Brigades, said, "I never thought my comrades outside had the capacity to carry out a complex military operation. ... We remembered ourselves as an organization formed by inexperienced young lads."<sup>66</sup> Two days after the crime, one secret service officer told the press that the perpetrators appeared to have had special commando training.<sup>67</sup>

When letters written by Moro were found later in a Red Brigades site in Milan, investigators hoped they would reveal key evidence. But Francesco Biscioni, who studied Moro's responses to his captors' questions, concluded that important sections had been excised when they were transcribed. Nonetheless, in one uncensored passage, Moro worried about how Andreotti's "smooth relationships with his colleagues of the CIA" would affect his fate.<sup>68</sup>

The two people with the most knowledge of Moro's letters were murdered. The *Carabinieri* general in charge of anti-terrorism, Carlo Alberto Della Chiesa, was transferred to Sicily and killed Mafia-style in 1982, a few months after raising questions about the missing letters.<sup>69</sup> Maverick journalist Mino Pecorelli was assassinated on a Rome street in 1979 just a month after reporting that he had obtained a list of 56 fascists betrayed to the police by Gelli.<sup>70</sup> Thomas Buscetta, a Mafia informer under witness protection in the U.S., accused Andreotti of ordering both killings for fear of being exposed.<sup>71</sup> But an inquiry by his political peers last year found no reason to prosecute the prime minister.

Della Chiesa and Pecorelli were only two of numerous witnesses and potential witnesses murdered before they could be questioned by judges untainted by links to *Gladio*.<sup>72</sup> President Cossiga, the interior minister when Moro died, told BBC: "Aldo Moro's death still weighs heavily on the Christian Democrats as does the decision I came to, which turned my hair white, to practically sacrifice Moro to save the Republic."<sup>73</sup>

### The Bologna Train Station Bombing

A huge explosion at the Bologna train station two years after Moro's death may have whitened the hair of many Italians — not just for the grisly toll of 85 killed and more than 200 injured — but for the official inaction that followed. Although the investigating magistrates suspected neofascists, they were unable to issue credible arrest warrants for more than two years because of false data from the secret services. By that time, all

58. Willan, *op. cit.*, pp. 189, 190. The role of the Hyperion Language School tallies with prosecutor Pietro Calogero's description of a terrorist command structure dictating the course of political violence in Italy.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 190-98.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 190-92.

62. Carlo Mastelloni, "Sentenza-Ordinanza" (Venice: 1989), p. 412; cited in Willan, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

63. Mastelloni, *op. cit.*, p. 508; cited in Willan, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

64. Willan, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-97.

65. BBC Special, "Gladio, Part III," *op. cit.*

66. *Ibid.*

67. Willan, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 286.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

71. Alan Cowell, "Italy Re-Examines 1978 Moro Slaying," *New York Times*, November 13, 1993, p. A13.

72. Others included a suspect in the Brescia bombing, who was executed in 1981 by fellow prisoners, and a suspect in the Bologna bombing, who was killed by the same prisoners a year later. Another Bologna witness was mortally wounded in Bolivia in 1982 with help from the CIA. Willan, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

73. BBC Special, "Gladio, Part III," *op. cit.*

but one of the five chief suspects, two of whom had ties to SID, had skipped the country.<sup>74</sup> The T4 explosive found at the scene matched the Gladio material used in Brescia, Peteano and other bombings, according to expert testimony before Judge Masteloni.<sup>75</sup>

In the trial, the judges cited the "strategy of tension" and its ties to "foreign powers." They also found the secret military and civilian structure tied into neofascist groups, P-2, and the secret services.<sup>76</sup> In short, they found the CIA and Gladio.

But their efforts to exact justice for the Bologna bombing came to nothing when, in 1990, the court of appeals acquitted all the alleged "brains." P-2 head Gelli went free, as did two secret service chiefs whose perjury convictions were overturned. Four gladiators convicted of participating in an armed group also won appeals. That left Peteano as the only major bombing case with a conviction of the actual bomber, thanks to Vinciguerra's confession.

The sorry judicial record in these monstrous crimes showed how completely the Gladio network enveloped the army, police, secret services and the top courts. Thanks to P-2, with its 963 well-placed brothers,<sup>77</sup> the collusion also extended into the top levels of media and business.

### Fruits of Gladio

By the early 1980s, however, court data revealed enough CIA fingerprints to provoke strong anti-U.S. sentiment. In 1981, the offices of three U.S. firms in Rome were bombed. In 1982, the Red Brigades kidnapped James L. Dozier, a U.S. general attached to NATO, calling him a "Yankee hangman."<sup>78</sup>

He was freed after five weeks by police commandos, reportedly with the help of the CIA's Mafia connections.<sup>79</sup> But damage to the U.S. image has been remarkably constrained considering what the U.S. did to Italian society and government for 50 years in the name of anticommunism.

Moro's final prediction came true. Instead of bolstering the center parties, Gladio, helped by the corruption scandals, destroyed them. Instead of destroying the leftists, Gladio revelations helped them win control of major cities while retaining one-third of parliament. By the early 1980s, the Red Brigades were wiped out, but the major sources of right-wing terrorism — the Mafia and the neofascists — remained active.<sup>80</sup>

The end results lead some to question the whole rationale of U.S. involvement in Italy, particularly in regard to the

"communist menace." According to Phillip Willan, who wrote the definitive book on Italian terrorism:

The U.S. has consistently refused to recognize the Italian Communist Party's increasingly wholehearted commitment to the principles of Western democracy and its validity as an alternative to the generally corrupt and incompetent political parties that have governed Italy since the war. Had it done so, much of the bloodshed resulting from the strategy of tension might have been avoided.<sup>81</sup>

Willan goes on to ask "whether U.S. and Italian intelligence officials may have deliberately over-emphasized the communist threat in order to give themselves greater power and greater leeway for their own maneuvers."<sup>82</sup>

### The Lessons of Gladio

As long as the U.S. public remains ignorant of this dark chapter in U.S. foreign relations, the agencies responsible for it will face little pressure to correct their ways. The end of the Cold War brought wholesale changes in other nations, but it changed little in Washington. In an ironic twist, confessed CIA mole Aldrich Ames has raised the basic question of whether the U.S. needs "tens of thousands of agents working around the world primarily in and against friendly countries." The U.S., he adds, "still awaits a real national debate on the means and ends — and costs — of our national security policies."<sup>83</sup>

The new government in Italy touts itself as a revolution of the disenfranchised, a clean break from the past. But the

fascists are back and gaining ground. The anti-Mafia party has been rejected, and the big cartels have tightened their grip on the economy. With P-2 brother

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*The fascists are back and gaining ground.*

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Berlusconi continuing to trade on the Cold War fear of communists, the Gladio perpetrators still unpunished, and "experts" in Washington raising fears of more terrorism,<sup>84</sup> it looks like business as usual in Italy.

81. Willan, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 353.

83. Aldrich H. Ames, "Spy Expresses Regret, Anger," *Washington Post*, April 29, 1994, p. A7.

84. For example, the Washington, D.C.-based Cato Institute's April 8, 1994 seminar, "Italy: Paradigm for a Post-Welfare-State World?" where close Berlusconi friend, Stan Burnett, of the Washington right-wing think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies raised the specter of new terrorist attacks.

74. Interview with Jeff Bale, March 21, 1994.

75. Giustolizi, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

76. Willems, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 119. When police discovered the list of members in March 1981, Gelli fled the country. He was later extradited from Switzerland to stand trial in the Bologna train station bombing. Willan, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

78. U.S. State Department, cable, January 28, 1982.

79. "Fat Man, Tailor, Soldier, Spy," *Time*, February 28, 1983, pp. 32-33.

80. Cases in point include the 1984 train bombing in the same tunnel outside Bologna as 10 years earlier, killing 15 and wounding 267, and the 1993 bombings of cultural symbols in Rome and Florence that killed 11 and injured 98 more.

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## Off the Shelf: CAQ's Books of Interest

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**Lost Promise: How CIA Analysis Misserves the Nation—An Intelligence Assessment, John A. Gentry,** (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1993, 315 pp., photos, endnotes, charts, glossary, index, \$42.50 hb).

Written by a man who worked in the Directorate of Intelligence (DI) from 1978-90, this book may give ex-Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) George Bush and present DCI R. James Woolsey indigestion. While CIA recruitment brochures describe it as "like a university," the author sees a bureaucracy layered with supervisors where "dishonesty is...a management tool." The politicization of analysis on Nicaragua under William Casey's DI director, Robert Gates, produced "chronic, very poor morale." The Agency is marked by "mandated simple-mindedness" and "offices with significant responsibilities [that] fall far short of what many seasoned observers consider satisfactory performance." The DI "please the managers" culture rife in the Reagan-Bush years is exemplified by the late 1980s case when, writing on the small, neo-Nazi *Republikaner* Party in Germany, analysts were explicitly told not to use the word "Republican" and risk offending the Reagan White House. A must for students and critics of the CIA.

**Mexico Under Salinas, Philip Russell** (Austin: Mexico Resource Center, 1994, 485 pp., endnotes, bibliography, index, appendices, photos, \$14.95 pb, from P.O. Box 7547, Austin, TX 78713).

Long-time Mexico watcher and journalist Russell has produced a timely resource on contemporary Mexico. Using an impressive array of sources, Russell even-handedly examines a broad range of issues, including political parties and electoral politics, human rights, U.S.-Mexico relations, NAFTA, the environment, and social conditions. Russell summarizes these and other key issues, while leaving the polemics for others. Students of Mexico will find this work a handy reference, while beginners would be hard-pressed to find a better starting place.

**Censored: The News That Didn't Make the News—And Why; The 1994 Project Censored Yearbook, Carl Jensen and Project Censored** (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows Press, 1994, 318 pp., index, \$14.95 pb).

Since 1976, Project Censored has sought out and publicized important stories that never make it into the mainstream media, or that appeared and vanished in the blink of an eye. The 1994 book contains a detailed analysis of the 25 stories chosen as the censored news stories of 1993, as well as a chronology of censorship, a re-

source guide, an alternative writers' market, and a review of "Junk Food News Stories"—the meaningless fluff that passes for serious news.

Among the top 25 are pieces on the failure of DARE, the sorry state of U.S. youth, renewed army biological warfare testing, oil and the U.S. intervention in Somalia, and a piece published in *CovertAction*, Johan Carlisle's report on the impact of public relations firms on the shaping of public opinion. *Censored* not only uncovers news we never hear, but also serves as an important reference work for issues of censorship and media bias.

**War in the Age of Intelligent Machines, Manuel De Landa** (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992, 271 pp., endnotes, index, photos, \$16.95 pb).

According to De Landa, the Cruise missiles that hit Baghdad during the Gulf War are only primitive versions of a still developing technology: the intelligent weapon. In this paradigm-blasting, thought-provoking work, De Landa cuts across disciplinary lines and levels of analysis to apply chaos theory to the development of weapons systems, technological innovation, even the development of armies themselves. His field of vision ranges from the chemistry of gunpowder to the technologies of machine vision and artificial intelligence, and embraces an incisive, eye-opening analysis of their potential applications to intelligence activities. A challenging but important book.

**Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left After the Cold War, Jorge Castañeda** (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1993, 498 pp., footnotes, index, \$27.50 hb), and **The Heart That Bleeds: Latin America Now, Alma Guillermoprieto** (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994, 345 pp., \$24.00 hb).

Knopf has published a pair of books on Latin America that, although quite different in scope and method, complement each other nicely and demand to be read together. Mexican political scientist Jorge Castañeda has written a thoughtful, provocative, and broad-ranging meditation on the history, present status, and possible futures for the Latin American left. Ranging from the millenarian Maoism of *Sendero Luminoso* to the emergence of the grassroots "social left," Castañeda brings an encyclopedic knowledge to bear. While he addresses Latin America, the questions, problems, and issues he raises cannot but provoke much-needed contemplation by leftists here in the U.S. In that sense, the themes in *Utopia Unarmed* are universal.

Guillermoprieto's book of essays also aspires to universality, and largely succeeds. Originally published in the *New Yorker* over five years, these pieces are shining examples of the essayist's art. Ranging across the capitals of Latin America, Guillermoprieto explores the politics of cocaine in Colombia, life in wartime in Peru, syncretic religion in Brazil, and the empire of garbage in Mexico City, among other topics. In so doing, she opens a window onto the cultures of Latin America and puts a recognizably human face on Castañeda's abstract questions.

***South Africa and the United States: The Declassified History — A National Security Archive Documents Reader*, Kenneth Mokoena, ed. (New York: The New Press, 1993, 313 pp., documents, \$35.00 hb).**

**T**his valuable research and reference tool pulls together selected documents from 30 years worth of formerly classified U.S. government documents on South Africa policy. The 58 documents include presidential decision directives, CIA and Defense Department assessments, and embassy and State Department policy papers and cable traffic. It documents U.S. involvement in South Africa's nuclear program and Reagan administration efforts to derail anti-apartheid public opinion and congressional action.

Kenneth Mokoena, a South African, provides context for the documentary history with a well-done introductory overview of U.S. Southern Africa policy, as well as glossaries of important actors and organizations and a

chronology of key events. The National Security Archive (a non-governmental organization) has once again done us all a service by researching, litigating for, compiling, analyzing, and now putting into book format an important, informative set of documents.

***America's Longest War: Rethinking Our Tragic Crusade Against Drugs*, Steven B. Duke and Albert C. Gross (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1993, end-notes, indexes, 518 pp., \$26.95 hb).**

**Y**ale law professor Duke and attorney Gross have written the most comprehensive look yet at the arguments for drug legalization. They lay out the history and politics of the U.S.'s decades-long "war on drugs," and examine the consequences of this policy. In several important chapters, they examine the social evils popularly attributed to the use and traffic in illegal drugs—addiction, street violence, property crime, etc.—and separate out those consequences related to drug use *per se* from those resulting from prohibition. They also paint a frightening picture of the price we all pay for prohibition—a full-fledged assault on our freedoms, our property, our personal autonomy, and the tearing of the social fabric. Finally, the authors make the argument for legalization and provide several detailed legalization models.

Readers of *CovertAction* will be especially interested in sections on the role of the CIA in international drug trafficking and on the DEA's growth as a de facto international drug police force.

*(Radiation, continued from p. 35)*

Agent Orange makers — even for veterans whose cancer appeared years after the settlement was reached.

The Interagency Working Group has representatives from every federal agency involved in radiation research and also includes a lawyer member whose past clients raise questions about his impartiality. Joel Klein, recently named White House Deputy Legal Counsel, was previously a partner in Klein Farr Smith & Taranto, a Washington, D.C. law firm which represented a number of corporate defendants in cases involving the due process rights of class action members. In 1985, Klein's firm won a Supreme Court decision in *Phillips Petroleum v. Shutts*, which narrowly interpreted the rights of claimants in class actions. Klein also has a case pending before the Supreme Court, *Ticor Title v. Brown*, which experts expect will further diminish the rights of injured parties in class action suits.

### Clouded Horizons

It is too early to tell what role either Feinberg or Klein will play in determining compensation for nuclear test victims, but their histories don't lend cause for optimism. And given the admini-

stration's efforts at damage control, some advocates of radiation victims are dubious that the recent disclosures will bring any more change than those in the past. Rob Hager, a public interest lawyer in Washington, has been fighting the DoE for years. He has waged an 11-year legal battle on behalf of the widow of Joe Harding, who developed cancer after working at a DoE uranium processing plant in Paducah, Kentucky.

"The DoE's approach to compensation is a scorched earth policy; settle no claims and litigate to the hilt," Hager charges. "They've changed their head, but it doesn't seem to be connected to the body."<sup>52</sup>

Eileen Welsome agrees. The Albuquerque journalist, who recently won a Pulitzer Prize for her reporting on this issue, was asked what she learned. She responded, "The DoE of today is no different from the DoE of 50 years ago. It's an obstructionist agency; it doesn't follow the law. I think it's an agency that bears careful scrutiny and constant scrutiny."<sup>53</sup>

52. Interview, May 1994.

53. Stephen Larese, "Uncovering the Government's Secrets," *Crosswinds* (Santa Fe, N.M.), March 1994.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Who Bombed Judi Bari?

It appears that *CovertAction* has become the most recent media outlet to be duped into putting out the latest fictionalized version of Judi Bari's life as victim ("The FBI Targets Judi Bari," by Ward Churchill, Winter 1993-94).

Churchill, self-styled Native American and self-proclaimed FBI expert, never contacted or interviewed either me or any of my associates or political colleagues about any of the totally false charges Bari has made about me. As a highly visible activist in movement and third party electoral politics for over 30 years—including a full term as the first regularly elected State Chair of the California Peace and Freedom Party (1970-72) — I was bemused by the Earth First! activist Pam Davis's statement that I "just materialized on the scene," since I'd been organizing in Sonoma County since Davis was about three years old.

Churchill buys into Bari's conspiracy tale big time, but not really surprisingly, since Bari spent an incredible effort crafting her story to make it fit the Churchillian model. But your readers should be aware that Churchill substitutes scholarly-looking footnotes for real research. Furthermore, Churchill uncritically bases his accusations entirely on deliberate disinformation provided to him by Bari, which Bari knows is not true.

Churchill should have looked not only at Bari's claims that she was targeted by various deep pocket institutions, like the FBI, one of the major timber companies, or certain police or sheriff's departments, but should have investigated the possibility that Cherney and Bari were the target of anti-abortionists, gyppo loggers, religious fanatics, male supremacists, ultra-rightwingers, or personal enemies.

I demand that Churchill retract the statements he made about me in his article. *CovertAction* would do well to put a reputable journalist on the story.

Irv Sutley, Glen Ellen, Calif.

### Churchill Replies

I will stand by the rather few things said about Irv Sutley in my article. Readers will note that in his response, he actually rebuts none of them. Instead, he elects to engage in *ad hominem* attacks, branding me among other things a "self-styled Native American." Had he done his own homework—the kind that involves reading the record, compiling documentary evidence and providing "scholarly footnotes" to support what is said—he would have found that I am an enrolled Keetoowah Cherokee (Roll No. 7627, Irv). This takes us to the various alternative scenarios he proposes regarding who might have done what to whom in the Bari/Cherney case. Both Sutley and the FBI say I should have "looked at" them. The fact is that I did, and found them to be absent both substance and merit.

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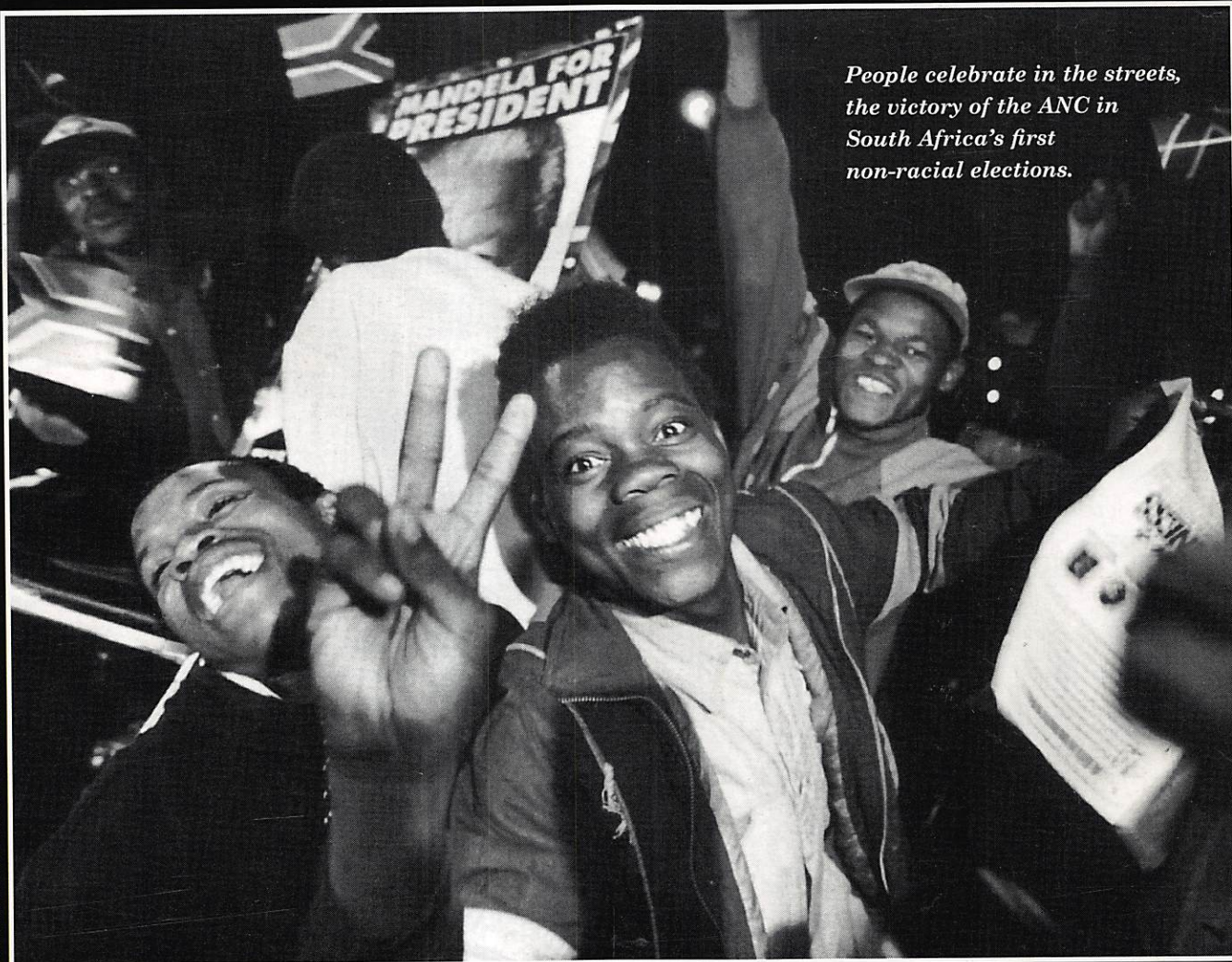
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